The nature and practice of primary physical education: A study of the perceptions of subject leaders

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by

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Abstract

The nature and practice of primary physical education: A study of the perceptions of subject leaders – Luke Jones

Much of the existing research on primary physical education (PE) has focused on the supposed importance and potential of the subject at this age range, rather than on its actual nature and practice. It is repeatedly claimed within the literature that the development of movement skills during early learning experiences is significant as it lays the foundation for continuing participation in health enhancing physical activity. While much of the existing research has focused on the supposed importance of primary PE, further study in this area expresses concerns about the deficiencies in the preparation of primary generalists to teach the subject; over the quality of learning and teaching within the subject; and over a perceived lack of investment (in the long term) in the primary age phase. In the light of the comparatively limited research relating to primary PE, the reported issues which surround the provision of the subject and the current emphasis on its promotion through the *PE and Sport Premium*, the study aimed to examine change alongside continuity in what has been identified, rhetorically at least, as an important area of PE. Drawing upon data gathered from one-to-one interviews with 36 subject leaders (SLs), this study sought to describe and explain the nature and practice of primary PE and develop a more adequate understanding of what is actually happening in the name of the subject. The analysis of primary PE was undertaken through the use of a case study of one School Sport Partnership (SSP) in the north-west of England, with the theoretical framework for this study being formed by the figurational sociological perspective. The findings revealed that the most common model for the delivery of PE involved responsibility being shared between the generalist class teacher and either a sports coach or specialist PE teacher. The SLs recognised strengths and weaknesses in all of the three main approaches used. However, while they favoured the use of specialist teachers because of their subject knowledge and expertise, the more prosaic constraints of cost and flexibility meant that the use of coaches had become increasingly popular. Whether or not, the growth of coaches is de-professionalizing the delivery of PE, it certainly appears to be exacerbating any existing tendency to turn primary PE into a pale imitation of the sport-biased curricular of secondary schools. Ironically, the apparent 'threat' to the status of PE in the primary curriculum (as well as the status of PE specialists) posed by the growth of coaches in curricular PE in primary schools may well be exaggerated by the primary *PE and Sport Premium* which appears to have added momentum to a change of direction regarding staffing the subject – towards sports coaches and away from generalist classroom teachers and PE specialists. The data also showed that while the pedagogical approaches adopted in primary PE lessons did include some inclusive and developmentally appropriate methods, the overriding focus was on didactic teaching approaches being used to achieve narrow skills based outcomes. The historical dominance of games, the inclusion of primary teachers in lengthening chains of interdependence with sporting groups and individuals, and the conflation of sport with PE were all thought to have influenced the adoption of a teaching model that is unduly influenced by sport. It was also clear from SLs responses, that the prevalence of teaching methods that bind didactic and skill based pedagogy are unlikely to be challenged by the greater inclusion of sports coaches within primary PE. Finally, the contents of primary PE lessons were shown, by the data, to be dominated by sport and traditional team games; and to be organised around the timings of the major inter-school competitions and tournaments. Overall it was argued that the portents of a future with sports coaches as the main deliverers of primary 'sport' lessons are there for all to see, and that this apparent change is best understood by locating the subject leaders of PE in the networks of interdependent relationships that they have with others.

Chapter One

Introduction

Primary school PE has been the focus of a comparatively small amount of research in recent years. Three of the main British academic journals for the sociological study of physical education (PE) are *The European Physical Education Review* (formerly the *Physical Education Review*), *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* (formerly the *European Journal of Physical Education*) and *Sport, Education and Society*. All three of these journals have been published for over 20 years and together account for well over a thousand articles on a wide range of topics that are to a greater or lesser extent associated with PE.

An online review of each issue of these three journals published since 1995 revealed 91 articles which showed some relevance to the study of primary PE. 34 of these articles were based in an international context, while the remaining 57 were centred on research related to primary PE within the United Kingdom. Having reviewed the content of these 91 articles, it was clear that three areas of primary PE research were most prominent: health and physical activity (no.21), pedagogy and motor skill learning (no.21) and teacher training (no.20) (see, for example, Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Elliot, Atencio, Campbell & Jess, 2013; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012; Jess & Collins, 2003; MacPhail, Kinchin & kirk, 2003; Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012; Ni Chroinin & Cosgrave, 2013; Tsangaridou, 2012; Waring, Warburton & Coy, 2007; Whitehead, 2001). These three areas of research collectively accounted for just less than three quarters of the articles published in relation to primary PE. This left a further 29 journal articles which addressed a broader range of less commonly covered topics. These included the nature of primary PE lessons (no.13), the teachers of primary PE (no.8), transitions from primary to secondary schooling (no.5) and the implementation of policy in primary PE (no.3) (see, for example, Blair & Capel, 2011; Bowles & O'Sullivan, 2012; Jess,

Keay & Carse, 2014; Rainer, Cropley, Jarvis & Griffiths, 2012; Smith, 2013; Ward & Quennerstedt, 2014, 2015; Williams, Hay & McDonald, 2011; Wright, 2004).

Overall it is difficult to put an exact figure on the number of articles which aim to describe and explain what is happening within primary PE, not least because a number of articles cover an aspect of this theme without doing so explicitly or in great depth. It is clear, however, that in relation to these three PE orientated journals, the primary phase is something of an under-researched area accounting for less than 10% of the articles published. When journal articles relating to the physiological study of health and physical activity are removed, less than 7% of those published related in some way to the primary phase. Of these, less than 5% were devoted to the study of primary PE within the UK.

The overall aim of this study, therefore, is to develop a more adequate understanding of primary PE. It does so because with notable exceptions (see examples above), comparatively little has been written about PE within the primary age phase and even fewer studies have attempted to provide a more holistic understanding of the nature and practice of the subject by linking the parts to the whole.

Much of the existing research, such as it is, has focused on the supposed importance and potential of the subject (in the development of movement skills and impact on health) at this age range, rather than on its actual nature or practice. It is repeatedly claimed within the literature that 'children's basic movement competence as the foundation for a lifetime of physical activity cannot be left to chance' (Jess, Dewar & Fraser, 2004, p.12) and that a child missing out on appropriate primary PE would be put at a health disadvantage in later life (Ennis, 2011). This, it is suggested, is because engagement in physical activity appears to

impact positively on children's movement skill development (Fisher, Reilly, Kelly, Montgomery, Williamson, Paton & Grant, 2005) which in turn, it is claimed, enables them to access a wide range of physical activities across their lifespan (Foweather, 2010; Jess & Collins, 2003). Investigations into the relationship between basic movements and physical activity participation have supposedly found that the level of basic movement skills significantly predicts the variety, time and intensity of children's on-going involvement in organised physical activity (Ennis, 2011). Put simply, primary PE is considered important as 'quality early learning experiences not only develop physical competencies but, crucially, also perceptions of competence that underlie the motivation that is vital to continuing participation' (Kirk, 2005, p.251).

In contrast to the primary based research which relates to its relative value; further study in this area expresses concern about the perceived issues in primary PE provision. The teaching of the subject is said to be compromised by deficiencies in the preparation of primary generalists to teach the subject. The Association for PE estimated in 2007 that almost half of newly qualified Primary teachers will have received only six hours or less of dedicated PE training. This research led Margaret Talbot, the then Chief Executive of the Association for PE, to state that in relation to primary PE training, 'preparation is often totally inadequate' (Talbot, 2007, p.1). Similar findings by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) led them to recommend that the time allocated to PE during initial teacher education (ITE) should be reviewed to 'ensure teachers are better prepared to teach all aspects of the subject' (Ofsted, 2009, p.7). Further concerns over the quality of continuing professional development (CPD) in PE (Casey, 2012) would suggest that significant inadequacies remain in the preparation of primary teachers to teach this aspect of the curriculum (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012).

The purported deficiency in the preparation and training of teachers is reflected in concerns over the quality of learning and teaching within the subject at primary level. A relatively extensive amount of primary PE literature suggests that many primary generalist class teachers lack the confidence, subject knowledge and pedagogical skills to teach the PE curriculum effectively (Bailey, Armour, Kirk, Jess, Pickup & Sandford, 2009; Blair & Capel, 2011; Griggs, 2007, 2010; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012) and that primary aged children subsequently suffer relatively low levels of skill proficiency (Foweather, 2010; Jess & Dewar, 2004).

These issues of quality are further compounded by a perceived lack of investment in the primary age phase: 'Primary school PE has traditionally received considerably less attention than secondary school PE. As a result, both the quality and the quantity of important influential factors like facilities, initial training, staff expertise and curricular time consistently fall short of the PE profession's expectations' (Jess & Collins, 2003, p.4). The launch of the primary *PE and Sport Premium* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Department for Education [DCMS/DfE], 2013) was, in part, an attempt to address these perceived issues in the time allocation, resources, value, status, support, content and quality of delivery in primary PE. It was a markedly different approach to primary school PE and sport on the part of the Coalition Government. It was the first 'bottom up' strategy of its kind as the premium, which on average amounted to £9,250 per primary school, was ring-fenced and provided directly to primary head teachers (Prime Minister's Office, 2013). The Coalition's direction of travel in terms of policy towards primary schools was confirmed in 2014, when the Government announced that investment in the *PE and Sport Premium* would be extended for a further five years up until 2020 (DCMS, Department for Education [DfE] & Number 10, 2014).

The introduction of the Premium occurred in a context in which the 'traditional' model of delivering PE in primary schools – whereby a so-called 'generalist' classroom teacher is responsible for teaching all curriculum subjects to her or his class – has been in place for a century or more (Blair & Capel, 2011). More recently, however, the number of adults other than teachers who are employed by primary schools to deliver the PE and school sport programme has altered significantly. This shift in provision has been augmented by *The Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links* (PESSCL) (Department for Education and Skills [DfES]/DCMS, 2003) strategy (later to become the *Physical Education, School Sport and Young People* strategy [PESSYP]), which aimed to engage children in two and then five hours of PE each week, and by the entitlement, in place since 2005, for teachers to be released from 10 per cent of their timetable for 'planning preparation and assessment' (PPA). Sports coaches initially employed to deliver extra-curricular activities and meet the two hour target were now increasingly being used to fill the timetable gap through the 'teaching' of curriculum time PE. The exact impact of PESSCL and PESSYP targets and 'PPA time' on the use of sports coaches is not clear (Griggs, 2010), but it appears indicative of a growing acceptance of a model in which the primary PE curriculum is increasingly taught by adults other than teachers; and sports coaches in particular.

Current research into primary PE appears to reveal, therefore, discrepancies between its value and provision. Much of the existing research has focused on the supposed importance and potential of primary PE to impact on the development of movement skills and health. Further study in this area, however, expresses concerns over the deficiencies in the preparation of primary generalists to teach the subject; over the quality of learning and teaching within the subject; and over the involvement of sports coaches in curricular time PE. This discrepancy

provides further reason for the study, as an understanding of the processes that enable or constrain development within primary PE will help inform the future of the subject.

The final justification for the study is based on the need to understand what actually happens in primary PE at this particular time, when there is so much investment in, and emphasis being placed on, the subject. The introduction of the primary *PE and Sport Premium* has increased the onus on schools to improve curricular and extra-curricular PE and sport provision. According to a Department for Education (DfE, 2014) survey, almost three-quarters (70%) of primary schools in England reported using the Premium in 2013-14 to make changes to the staffing of curricular PE. Of these, the vast majority (82% – up from 37% the previous year) reported the use of external sport coaches to deliver curricular PE. At the same time, the vast majority (86%) of primary schools described using the premium to up-skill and train existing staff. All-in-all, it has become apparent that primary PE is undergoing a period of change which may transform the nature and practice of the subject.

In the light of what has been shown to be the comparatively limited research relating to primary PE, the reported issues which surround the subject and the current emphasis on its promotion through the *PE and Sport Premium*, the study aims to examine change alongside continuity in what has been identified (by the Government's investment at the least) as an important area of PE. The overall aims of the study are, therefore, to describe and explain the nature and practice of primary PE. The intention is to develop a more adequate understanding of what is actually happening in the name of the subject. Thus, the research for this study will seek to confirm what we seemingly know already about primary PE, while also seeking to answer some of the questions that emerge from a review of current literature. The following research questions have been identified to guide the study:

1. What is taught in Primary PE and how is it organised?
2. Who teaches primary PE?
3. How is the subject taught within primary schools?
4. What is the policy context in which primary PE is delivered?
5. What are the PE subject leaders' perceptions of primary PE and school sport?

The theoretical framework for this study is formed by the figurational sociological perspective which derives from the work of Norbert Elias (1897-1990). This approach emphasizes that human beings are bonded together by ties of interdependence and that to understand social behaviour it is necessary for its study to be within the context of these complex interdependencies that are referred to as 'figurations'. Elias (1970) also maintained that in social research it is necessary to retain a detachment or 'separation from oneself'. He noted that as social researchers are part of the network that they are investigating, they cannot avoid a degree of involvement in their own research. As such, the study will aim to adopt a relatively detached approach to analysing the interdependent relationships of the people who are involved in teaching and leading primary PE. The theoretical framework for the thesis will be explained in more detail in Chapter Three, but by adopting the principles of a figurational perspective it is hoped to gain a more adequate understanding of the nature of the subject and the relationships involved.

The analysis of primary PE will be undertaken through the use of a case study of a School Sport Partnership (SSP). SSPs are clusters of secondary and primary schools created by the PESSCL Strategy (DfES/DCMS, 2003) in order to facilitate its overall aims. These partnerships were typically made up of a Specialist Sports College, eight secondary schools

and around fifty feeder primary and special schools. Investment in partnerships ended in 2011 as Michael Gove (the then Secretary of State for Education) rejected the model based on the costs involved and on the perceived failings of the system. Nonetheless, many primary schools continued to work in their clusters, and the partnership does provide a convenient case study for analysing the nature and practice of primary PE.

The study uses semi-structured interviews to examine the perceptions of 36 primary PE subject leaders (SLs) in a case study of one SSP in the north-west of England. The expectation that primary teachers with a PE specialism would assume a subject leadership role has been in place since the introduction of the national curriculum for PE (NCPE). Teachers who have assumed this role have been referred to as 'curriculum leaders' or 'subject coordinators', but more recently the Department for Education has used the term 'Subject Leaders' to define and acknowledge the importance of the role. SLs, with their expertise and direct involvement in teaching and leading the subject, are well placed within the social network of partnerships, to provide an insight into the nature and practice of primary PE.

Finally, the data gathered from the interviews with SLs will be analysed using the principles of Grounded Theory. In other words, the analysis will involve the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, the coding of transcribed data through the use of constant comparative analysis and the writing of memos to explain categories and emerging thinking (Strauss & Corbin 1990). This approach will allow for the themes that emerged from the data, beyond those related to the research questions, to be captured and analysed. As such, the study will add to current knowledge through empirical research and an in depth case-study of the key participants in one SSP. Such insights may provide a more detached evaluation and more adequate understanding of the nature and practice of primary PE.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The overall aim of this review of relevant literature is to establish the state of knowledge regarding primary PE in the UK in the early decades of the 21st century. More specifically the review will be split into the following four sections. (i) *The emergence and development of primary PE*. The literature review will begin by considering the historical development of primary schooling and within this the emergence and development of primary PE. The aim will be to examine the broader context of contemporary primary PE and, in doing so, identify the antecedents of current practice. (ii) *The socio-political context for primary PE*. This section will examine two aspects; the development and influence of the national curriculum for PE, following the 1988 Education Reform Act, and the impact of recent sports policies on the nature and practice of primary PE. (iii) *The values and status of primary PE*. The third section of the literature review will consider how primary PE is perceived from within the PE profession, to identify the values that are associated with the subject in the primary phase of education. This understanding will contribute to an analysis of the status of primary PE and the impact that this has on the teaching of the subject. (iv) *The teaching, content and organisation of primary PE*. Finally, the chapter will conclude by reviewing the academic literature that helps explain what is taught in primary PE, who teaches it and how it is taught. This final section will begin to draw together, and elaborate on, some of the themes previously identified within the review of literature – to establish the state of knowledge regarding the nature and practice of primary PE.

The emergence and development of primary schooling and primary PE

This section will examine the historical development of primary schooling and within this the emergence and development of primary PE. The analysis will consider the medical and

military rationales that underpinned the emergence of the subject following the 1870 Education Act. It will examine the progress of Swedish gymnastics and how this was replaced by games as the dominant form of the subject. Finally it will consider the re-emergence of a health based rationale for the subject as a consequence of broader social influences. The aims of this section are to trace the development of the subject, provide a context for the analysis of contemporary primary PE and identify the antecedents of current practice.

Medical and military

The Forster Education Act of 1870 is commonly seen as the starting point of universal elementary education. Prior to this schooling was organised at a local level by voluntary bodies and as a consequence provision varied greatly across the country. The Forster Act did not provide either compulsory or universally free education; nevertheless it is still thought to be the decisive moment at which the Government's role changed. The Forster act marked the beginning of mass schooling in Britain and the point at which the state finally assumed responsibility for the education of all children.

Physical training was not included as a compulsory constituent of elementary education in the 1870 Education Act. The Government rejected arguments in favour of the subject mainly because of other more urgent financial demands (McIntosh, Dixon, Munrow & Willetts, 1969). The 1871 revised code of regulation, however, amended the Act to allow for the inclusion of drill within elementary schools. These early physical training programmes mirrored the approaches used by the army (Donavan, Jones & Hardman, 2006); they were led by drill sergeants, required a uniform and unquestioned response to commands and were perceived to promote fitness, obedience and discipline. The early inclusion of drill set in

place what was to remain one of the leitmotifs of primary PE, which in the latest national curriculum is expressed as the aim of promoting physical activity and healthy, active lifestyles (Department for Education [DfE], 2013a).

The adoption of drill within the emerging system of elementary education was in part a result of its perceived capacity to promote the physical fitness, obedience and discipline of working class children. It was also accepted, however, as a more pragmatic response to the constraints of large class sizes and limited resources that were endured at the time. By 1880 the Mundella Act had firmly enforced the compulsory nature of schooling, and brought a flood of young children into elementary education (Barnard, 1964). The provision of education on this unprecedented scale raised the cost of schooling and led to the need for teaching approaches which above all else were cheap. The system still used in the majority of primary schools today, of having a generalist classroom teacher lead all subjects, including PE, was established around the need for a cost effective approach to education. The requirement to teach a large number of pupils and to do so in an inexpensive way shaped the type of education that was available for children and also saw drill continue as the recognised form of PE until the 1890s. While this form of exercise was efficient and supposedly effective in developing children's discipline and obedience, concerns for health promotion undermined the expansion of drill and allowed for the development of an alternate system of physical training (Hargreaves, 1994).

Swedish gymnastics was developed from the work of Per Henrik Ling. In 1814 he established the Central Institute of Gymnastics in Stockholm and laid the foundations for what became the Swedish system of gymnastics (McIntosh, 1968). Ling's system used a structured series of free standing movements to exercise the whole body. As such, the exercises themselves

had much in common with drill, but were founded on a more detailed 'scientific' understanding of anatomy and physiology. The theoretical base of the Swedish system afforded it immediate status and credibility, as physicians endorsed Ling's system by presenting it as a regulated form of exercise that would preserve the health of children (McIntosh, 1968). The London School Board was persuaded by the benefits of the Ling system, not least because by the late 1880's the physical deterioration of the masses and the debilitating impact of sedentary schooling itself, became an issue for the Government. It was only with the expansion of compulsory schooling 'that administrators began to realise how many children were impeded by malnutrition, deformities and ill-health' (Barnard, 1964, p.223). These concerns were expressed by the end of the century in the concept of national efficiency, and gave rise to the argument for compulsory physical training in state elementary schools as a means of addressing the health and living conditions of working class children (Kirk, 1992).

While Swedish gymnastics was established in London by the 1890s, the involvement of various interest groups meant that for any system to be adopted on a wider scale it would need to be flexible and meet a range of concerns. A desire for social control, discipline and preparation for the workplace, competed with more philanthropic concerns for the educational value of the subject and its capacity to combat deprivation and foster good health. These contrasting priorities and the practical constraints of large class sizes and limited equipment favoured the Swedish system (Kirk, 1992). The Swedish approach was sufficiently flexible to appease the concerns of the Government and the military for a cheap system of physical training which would inculcate discipline and obedience. It was also suitably structured to cater for large numbers, while at the same time also supposedly having a scientific base which supported its impact on health. The Swedish approach ostensibly

developed and endured as a national programme from the 1890s to the 1930s because of its capacity to meet the range of existing and emerging health based needs within society (Kirk, 1992). As such, it was the emerging rationale of medical rather than military that saw Swedish gymnastics finally prevail in elementary physical training.

The therapeutic basis of Swedish gymnastics gave it sufficient credibility to be adopted as means of addressing the pressing concerns for the health and living conditions of working class children. The need for cleanliness, physical exercise, and appropriate nutrition and fresh air dominated within elementary education. Exercise was now defined by medical practitioners in medical terms as therapy; a means of compensating for and remedying the physical and postural defects associated with poverty (Kirk, 1992).

Gymnastics and therapy

Swedish gymnastics was the established approach within physical training during the period from the 1890s to 1930s. It dominated the subject's curriculum time, was firmly recognized as the foundation of female professional training and was largely considered to be synonymous with physical training. While the Swedish system was selected and promoted nationally as the preferred form of physical training by the Board of Education, some reservations were initially expressed as to the narrow curriculum and mechanistic teaching methods that this approach represented. The limitations of the Swedish approach soon became apparent as in practice the formalised exercises were seen to do little to engage or inspire pupils (Smith, 1974). Thus, the inclusion of games in the 1909 Syllabus of Physical Training represented an initial response to these concerns and a move away from formal teacher directed exercises.

The inclusion of games activities within elementary schools was seemingly influenced by the upper class experience of education. A process of class imitation took place in the newly formed Grammar schools. These newer schools tended to emulate the curriculum, aspirations and culture of the established public schools and aimed to provide an equally well regarded education for middle class children. As the values associated with athleticism were a key feature of the ruling elite's education in public schools, participation in team games was similarly promoted as part of the middle class Grammar school ethos (McIntosh, 1968). Competitive sports were well established within these schools, and were also a popular leisure activity across the social spectrum, but their position within elementary education for the lower middle and working classes was less clear. The 1909 syllabus saw running and jumping games added to the tables of Swedish exercises, although these were only to be performed for a limited time and still in a formal and controlled manner. While the running and jumping games had little in common with the team games adopted by public schools, their inclusion was justified by a similar rationale of fostering co-operation, self-sacrifice and control. The belief born in public schools, that games based physical activity promoted 'character', helped secure their inclusion in the Board of Education's syllabus for elementary schools (Theodoulides & Armour, 2001).

Despite the addition of running and jumping games to the 1909 syllabus, practical constraints such as the lack of specialist teachers, and poor facilities and equipment meant that in reality the working class child's experience of physical training was still dominated by Swedish gymnastics. Nonetheless the recommendation for the inclusion of games, albeit for only a few minutes, marked a move away from teacher led physical exercise and also extended the ideology which underpinned the subject. Moral and character developing aspects of learning were being claimed for the subject in official documentation for the first time (Theodoulides

& Armour, 2001); and still feature as part of the current primary NCPE, despite the lack of evidence to support them: 'Opportunities to compete in sport and other activities build character and help to embed values such as fairness and respect' (DfE, 2013a, p.198).

The movement towards greater freedom in physical training programmes was consistent with the rise of more progressive teaching approaches which embraced the capacity of children to learn and develop skills. The 1919 *Syllabus of Physical Training* continued to stress a broadening concept of the subject, while still retaining therapeutic Swedish exercises firmly at its core. The exercises were largely a continuation of the 1909 syllabus, but teachers were given more freedom, with games and dance activities being included to enliven the work (Smith, 1974). The Syllabus now recommended that these games and dance activities should account for at least half of physical training lessons and justified their inclusion by highlighting the value of enjoyment and recreation (Board of Education, 1919). This rational, which seemingly emerged as part of the progressive educational movement, is still prominent in the justification provided by teachers for the inclusion of PE in primary education (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012) indeed pupil enjoyment is often presented as evidence of effective PE teaching (Placek, 1983).

The extension of the school leaving age to 14 in the 1920's raised more questions about the appropriateness of learning activities for young adolescent children and added momentum to the movement away from formal teaching approaches and a narrow focus on Swedish gymnastics. The 1933 Syllabus of Physical Training included gymnastics, dance and a broader range of simple running, jumping and ball games for younger pupils; and also claimed that forms of established team games could be appropriate for the older pupils in elementary education. The 1933 edition also saw the inclusion of athletics, swimming and

outdoor and adventurous activities and, in so doing, established a pattern of provision around six activity areas that has endured within primary PE until the current day (Ward, 2013; Ward & Griggs, 2011). It was games that emerged, however, as the more dominant of the six activity areas, with the recommendation that more curriculum time be allocated to its teaching, with at least one lesson a week being devoted to this activity. Its emergence was largely based on the class influenced ideology of character development, with leadership, fair play and sporting behaviour all explicitly associated with the playing of competitive team games (Theodoulides & Armour, 2001). The prominent position of team games in the 1933 syllabus was not, however, realised in practice, as economic and practical constraints militated against their development. The National Playing Fields Association was founded in 1925 to promote access to suitable facilities, but a shortage of space and money meant that most elementary schools were restricted to small sided games that could be played on the school yard; rather than the team games that were included in the 1933 syllabus (Hargreaves, 1994).

The rise of games was also constrained by the relatively powerful position of female gymnasts who criticized them for being recreational rather than educational (McIntosh et al, 1969). The influence of Swedish gymnasts was on the wane, however, as their preference for formal methods of instruction were being challenged by the continued emergence of more progressive approaches to education. The new teaching methods that were being included in elementary schools following the *Hadow Report* were very different to the formal instruction associated with Swedish gymnastics; and consideration was given for the first time to 'the modern desire for rhythm in movement and in the elimination of stiffness and rigidity' (Board of Education, 1933, p.7). Not only did the philosophical shift towards more progressive pedagogy undermine Swedish gymnastics, it also challenged the conception of

the subject as being physical 'training'. The McNair Report of 1942 was influenced by progressivism and highlighted the more holistic aim of teaching; that of developing the whole child. Thus, the term physical education rather than physical training was presented as being a more appropriate title for a subject that was seen to play a significant and unique role in children's education (Donovan, Jones & Hardman, 2006).

Games and male PE

The 1944 Butler Education Act followed the *Hadow Report* in acknowledging the need for more progressive teaching approaches, but also looked to reorganised education along 'scientific' lines. The Act announced the beginning of the Ministry of Education and also the end of elementary schooling (Simon, 1964). In its place, three progressive phases of education; primary, secondary and further were established, with the introduction of the 'eleven plus' exam marking the relationship between the first two. The testing of children at the end of primary education initially found broad political support across all parties, but by the beginning of the 1950s a more critical perspective emerged. The concern to empower children through education finally led to the acceptance of comprehensive schools as the preferred government model in 1965 (Kirk, 1992; Simon, 1985, 2010).

The 1944 Education Act, and the raising of the school leaving age to 15 in 1947, led to the reorganisation and rapid expansion of secondary schooling. These developments raised concerns around the appropriateness of provision for older pupils and challenged the relatively narrow PE curriculum, which was still influenced by the therapeutic Swedish gymnastics model. More suitable forms of PE had to be explored. The reorganisation and expansion of secondary schooling, following the Butler act, also brought the necessity for more teachers. A high number of male PE teachers entered the profession for the first time.

The historical association with militarism and drill meant that male PE teachers were initially stigmatised as social inferiors, but men gradually became accepted within the profession and gained greater status as governments invested in the secondary phase of education (Kirk, 1992, Smith, 1974).

The need for an appropriate curriculum for older children and the emergence of a male perspective on PE contributed to the continued demise of the Swedish system. The response of female physical educators to progressive developments in education, however, also undermined its position and led to the Swedish system finally being replaced with educational gymnastics. The more prescribed and formal mass teaching methods adopted as part of the Swedish system were the antithesis of modern developments within primary education. In contrast to Swedish gymnastics, which was based on posture and didactic mass teaching methods, educational gymnastics developed with a concern for movement quality and individual creativity. It represented a more open ended and child centred approach to gymnastics, aiming to elicit a range of creative responses rather than a uniform reaction to a direct command (Smith, 1974). This approach was valued within primary PE as its open ended nature accommodated different levels of ability and allowed for the inclusion of children at different stages of development (Jones, 1996). As such, educational gymnastics was seen to be developmentally appropriate and consistent with a contemporary child centred approach that valued the creative, aesthetic and collaborative aspects of primary education. The publication of *Moving and Growing* and *Planning the Programme,* by the Ministry of Education in the early 1950s, confirmed the value that was now placed on movement quality and individual creativity (McIntosh, 1968).

The female PE perspective was still highly influential within primary schools at this time and led to the acceptance of educational gymnastics as the standard approach within primary PE. The female perspective retained its stronghold within primary PE, but as this age phase became less important, so too did its influence on the development of the subject as a whole (Kirk, 1992). The dominant position of primary female PE teachers was overtaken by the growth of secondary education. The Government invested heavily in this phase of education and inadvertently supported by the rise of male physical educators, who valued competition as an appropriate means of engaging older secondary aged children. The dominant position of secondary over primary PE was established at this time and largely remained unchallenged until the publication of the *Primary PE and Sport Premium* in 2013 (DCMS & DfE, 2013).

By the start of the 1960s competitive team sports came to redefine the subject and occupied the most prominent position within the PE curriculum. This transition was influenced by the rise of male physical educators, but found further support in the educational press who were seemingly uncritical in their acceptance of the public school games ethos. The widespread and uncritical acceptance of sport within education secured investment in shared facilities as the Government sought to promote team games as a means of curing social ills and fostering a national identity through international sporting success. As such, investment and interest in sport started to influence the development of PE (McIntosh, 1968). The growth of political interest in sport was marked by the introduction of a government minister for sport in 1963, and by the creation of the sports council in 1965 (Smith, 1974). The establishment of the latter brought a focus on performance and excellence and demonstrated that sport was important in its own right (McIntosh, 1968). These contrasting and overlapping forces combined to bring sport and team games to the forefront of thinking on PE. They worked in different ways, but collectively consolidated team games as being the traditional form of PE

within both secondary and then primary education (Jones, 1996, Kirk, 1992). Indeed, the influence of the sport discourse is a pervasive feature of primary PE that continues to dominate and shape the development of the subject (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2015).

Health related exercise and prevention

The rise of competitive team games, which was arguably the definitive aspect of the emerging male perspective on PE, also led to a concern for improved performance through skill development and physical fitness. As such, a new conceptualisation of the relationship between PE and fitness emerged, one that was based on a functional 'scientific' understanding of exercise and the impact it had on human performance in competition (Kirk, 1992).

By the start of the 1960s medical research not only confirmed the relationship between exercise and fitness, but also the relationship between sedentary lifestyles and health concerns. Affluence and the capacity to pay for innovative labour saving devises was now linked to sedentariness, which in turn was shown to have an adverse impact on health; particularly obesity and coronary heart disease. The preventative value of physical activity provided scientific functionalists with authenticity, as medical professionals were promoting exercise as a way of countering the health problems that were related to modern living. Coronary heart disease emerged as being of particular importance as regular exercise was recognised as an effective way of addressing what had become one of the developed world's most pernicious health problems (Kirk, 1992).

The medical relationships that had been established through scientific research also provided a credible rationale for the inclusion of PE within schools; as exercise was shown to combat

the physical effects of affluence and inactive lifestyles. These relationships were, by and large, welcomed by the PE profession as they provided status for the subject and a clear mandate for a greater proportion of curriculum time (Fox, 1996). There were reservations from within primary PE, however, as concerns arose over the possible reduction of the subject to simplistic measurements of physical adaptation and the concomitant prioritisation of body shape over quality of movement. Female educational gymnasts argued for the aesthetic, moral and cognitive learning that the subject provided; not merely the physical. The re-emergence of a purely physical rationale was seen from this perspective as a retrograde step towards an old fashioned conception of the subject (Kirk, 1992).

Despite reservations from female physical educators, the promotion of the fitness movement in schools was welcomed from a public health perspective (Fox, 1996). The association between exercise and the medical profession helped provide a strong rationale for health-related fitness in schools, but the commonly adopted approach of measuring and displaying performance data immediately exposed the less competent and created a barrier to participation. For the more vulnerable children the avoidance of formal fitness and exercise activities was the obvious solution to the threat of failure and its detrimental impact on social standing (Fox, 1996). This realisation, coupled with further scientific research into the genetic components of fitness, led to an evolving understanding of the role of exercise in schools at the end of the 1980s. Thus, exercise developed a stronger association with its potential to influence the current and future health of children. A shift in the orientation of exercise science was taking place, with a concern for influencing behaviour and health promotion, rather than a narrow focus on fitness and testing. As a result, the process of exercise rather than the product of fitness took prominence within education at the end of the

1980s with ‘health-related exercise’ becoming the established terminology within PE (Fox, 1996, Harris & Penny, 2000).

The revived interest in the association between health and PE was consolidated with the arrival of the first NCPE in 1992; as this publication formally included Health Related Exercise (HRE) under the cross-curricular theme of health education. The revision of the NCPE in 1995 repositioned HRE as part of the introductory statements for each Key Stage giving it a more prominent position within the text. While structural changes gave health a more central position at this time, the dominance of games, being compulsory at all Key Stages, meant that by comparison it still occupied a comparatively subordinate position. Despite this, the period following the 1995 revision of the NCPE saw a concerted effort through government policy to use schools as vehicle for health promotion. The 1997 white paper *Excellence in Schools* (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 1997); the Health Education Authority’s *Young and Active* (HEA, 1998) and the range of publications related to the *Healthy Schools* programme (DfEE, 1999) all established schools as key area for health promotion (Green & Thurston, 2002).

Successive revisions of the primary NCPE, in 2000 and 2013, continued the trend of giving health a more central position. In 2000 ‘knowledge and understanding of fitness and health’ was included as one of the four strands of learning (DfEE/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority [QCA], 1999), while in 2013 two of the four overarching aims of the curriculum related to ensuring that all pupils ‘lead healthy, active lives’ and are ‘physically active for sustained periods of time’ (DfE, 2013a, p.198). The rationale of health being central to the ethos of, and justification for, PE has according to Waddington (2000) re-emerged because of several factors such as the growing societal interest in health, the cost of health care and its

link to increased obesity levels and heart disease. Thus, the current health based rationale for PE contrasts to that of the early twentieth century as it is characterised by a concern for the prevention of the health impact of sedentary behaviours, rather than a cure for postural or physical defects that were largely a consequence of the deprivation endured at the time.

Summary

Since the inception of state education the nature and practice of primary PE have been influenced by a wide range of social, economic and political factors. This section has aimed to trace the key moments in the emergence and development of the subject and set them in the context of wider changes in primary schooling and education in general.

The subject emerged under the influence of the military as drill based physical training. This was believed to instil physical fitness, discipline and obedience in working class children, but by the end of the nineteenth century, it had given way to Swedish gymnastics as the accepted form of the subject. The practice of Swedish gymnastics had much in common with drill, but it was the rationale of medical rather than military alone that saw it prevail. The therapeutic basis of Swedish gymnastics gave it sufficient credibility to be adopted as means of addressing the pressing concerns for the health and living conditions of working class children at that time.

At the start of the twentieth century the raising of the leaving age, the emergence of progressive teaching ideologies and the process of class imitation saw the gradual introduction of games activities into a physical training programme that was still dominated by Swedish gymnastics. By 1933 the continued expansion of the physical training syllabus saw six activity areas being referenced for the first time; with the title ‘physical education’

being established soon after. The continued rise of games was influenced by the increasingly powerful position of male secondary PE teachers, while at the same time Swedish gymnastics was undermined from within primary PE as teachers looked to adopt more progressive approaches that were focused on movement rather than posture. Educational gymnastics, sat alongside dance, swimming and games at the heart of primary PE.

Finally, a more recent development was the re-emergence of a health based rationale for primary PE. This began through male PE teachers' interest in the 'scientific' relationship between exercise and fitness; as it was seen to be a means of enhancing competitive performance. The understanding of the role of exercise in schools evolved however, and at the end of the twentieth century it moved away from a narrow focus on fitness and testing and towards a concern to influence the current and future health of all children.

The socio-political context for primary PE

Having examined the historical development of primary schooling and primary PE, this section will continue to examine the context which has shaped contemporary PE. More specifically it will consider the impact of policy towards education, particularly the development and influence of the national curriculum for PE following the 1988 Education Reform Act. It will also explore the more recent sports policies which have influenced the nature and practice of primary PE; such as the *Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links* strategy (DfES/DCMS, 2002), the *PE and Sport Strategy for Young People* (DCSF/DCMS, 2008) and the *PE and Sport Premium (DCMS/DfE, 2013).*

The National Curriculum

The 1988 Education Reform Act

Britain entered a new political era in 1979, with the election of Margaret Thatcher as the new Conservative prime minister. The economic and social policies of the incoming Government were marked by their aim to reduce taxation and privatise key national industries. These policies were seen as characteristic of a neo-liberal approach that was founded on a belief in the (global) free market and rights of individuals (Roberts, 2009). As such, spending on welfare was also reduced and industries were subjected to market forces; despite the impact these measures had on unemployment and the social unrest that followed (Jones, 2003). The neo-liberal policies which promoted market principles and centralised control were also extended to education, with the adoption of a competitive free market approach to raising standards (Ball, 2007). Thus, education policy in the 1980s was marked by two core aims. The first was to introduce market forces into the system by publishing league tables of school performance and asking parents to choose where to send their child based on an understanding of the standards achieved. This seemingly increased the influence of parents and children; who were now portrayed as consumers, rather than more passive recipients of a public service. The second aim was to undermine the dominant role of the local education authority, by transferring statutory control of curricular and assessment matters to central government (Gillard, 2011). The impact of these changes on primary PE will be examined in more detail, but the influence of neo-liberal policies were ostensibly seen, amongst other things, in the greater power of head teachers (Rainer et al, 2012), the increased marketization of educational services such as extracurricular sport (Williams & MacDonald, 2015) and the prioritisation of core subjects (Griggs, 2007).

The Government's avowed intention to take greater control of what was taught in schools was realised with the publication of the 1988 Education Reform Act that established the framework for the National Curriculum (DES, 1988). School year groups, covering the age range of 5 to 16, would be organised around 'Key Stages', with the Key Stages 1 and 2 covering the 5-7 and 7-11 primary age groups. Of the subjects to be taught, English, mathematics and science were categorised as 'core', while others, including PE, were designated 'foundation' subjects. The 1988 Education Reform Act (DES, 1988) was the culmination of the Conservative Government's education policy. With its publication the Government assumed central control of the curriculum and took power away from local authorities, while also establishing economic market principles in what had previously been perceived as a public service (Jones, 2003).

The development of 'Thatcherite' education policy in the 1980s coincided with a period where PE teachers appeared to be undecided as to the nature and value of their subject. PE was not clearly defined as being different from sport, while the subject was also increasingly influenced by both a health based rationale and the rise of a more academic conception of PE. PE teachers did not represent a homogenous group and the lack of consensus between varying health, sport and educational perspectives undermined any attempts to present a clear and consistent argument as to the nature and purpose of the subject (Penney & Glover, 1998). Given the divisions and comparatively low status of PE at the time, it was with some relief, that the profession greeted the inclusion of PE as a foundation subject within the National Curriculum in 1992 (Houlihan & Green, 2006). The value and status of PE, and its impact within primary education, will be explored in more detail throughout the thesis.

The inclusion of PE in the statutory orders secured its immediate future and reaffirmed its place as one distinct subject within the range and content of curriculum. The final documents for PE outlined a primary curriculum that was to be organised around pupils' practical performance in six activity areas: athletics, dance, games, gymnastic swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities. There was a general expectation for all six areas to be taught in both primary Key Stages, but with greater flexibility around swimming, such that its teaching could begin in Key Stage 2.

While the requirement for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across the range of six activity areas did ensure some breadth of content, the development of the NCPE, also favoured a narrow focus on sport and team games. The position of games was evident in the interim report which stated that they regarded 'competitive games, both individual and team, as an essential part of any programme of PE' (DES/Welsh Office [WO], 1991, p. 12). It is interesting to note that no other areas of the PE curriculum were highlighted in this way and that it was specifically 'competitive' games that were referred to by the Working Group that was established by the Government to advise on the content of the NCPE. The Working Group, therefore, started to define and make explicit reference to the value of one particular activity area and seemingly prioritised it within the programme of study for PE (Curtner-Smith & Meek 2000, Penney & Glover, 1998). The preferred view of the Government was finally realised in the publication of the NCPE in 1992, as games activities were prioritised and afforded a unique position of being the only compulsory activity area up to the end of Key Stage 3 (DES/WO, 1992). The dominance of games was evident in the first NCPE and in all subsequent revisions - and the impact of its privileged position will be returned to throughout the thesis.

National Curriculum for Physical Education 1995

The changes introduced by the NCPE in 1992 were part of a major on-going reform of education that was already perceived as overwhelming by many teachers (Penney & Evans, 1999). The national curriculum was introduced into primary schools from 1989 onwards and it soon became clear that the demands of the new orders were very difficult for schools to manage and implement. Concerns were expressed that time spent on administration tasks and testing was actually having a detrimental effect on teaching and learning in the classroom (Trowler, 2003) and that that schools were finding it difficult to accommodate the statutory content for each subject within the available time (Penney & Evans, 1999). As such, the Government was forced into an urgent review of the national curriculum.

The publication of the revised NCPE in 1995 saw the inclusion of half units and end of Key Stage descriptions, and the removal of the non-statutory guidance altogether (Department for Education [DfE], 1995). In Key Stage 1, only games, gymnastics and dance were now to be taught, while all six activity areas were still expected to be included in Key Stage 2. This restructuring arguably gave teachers greater freedom in the way that they interpreted the new orders, however, the bias towards games was maintained, as this was the only area exempt from the move to reduce content by splitting activities into half units. Overall, the privileged position of games within the curriculum went largely unchallenged, if anything its status was strengthened as it was now made compulsory for all pupils at all Key Stages (DfE, 1995).

The 1995 National Curriculum was the last major educational reform of the outgoing Conservative Government, with the Labour party being elected to power in 1997. New Labour's first white paper on education, *Excellence in Schools* (DfEE, 1997), outlined a range of proposals including the daily teaching of numeracy and literacy in primary schools.

The immediate impact of the national literacy (1998) and numeracy (1999) strategies was a reduction in curriculum time for other subjects. Given its relative status, a theme which will feature throughout the thesis, PE was particularly vulnerable to these competing priorities, with the *Young people and sport national survey 1999*, noting the decline in PE curriculum time; 'over a third of our 6 to 8 year olds are doing less than an hour a week of PE' (Rowe & Champion, 2000, p.24). Speednet (2000) similarly claimed that over half a million hours of PE had been sacrificed in primary schools following the implementation of the numeracy and literacy policies, a claim that was endorsed by the National Association of Head Teachers (1999, p.6) who blamed the loss of PE curriculum time on 'government initiative overload and National Curriculum pressures'.

While numeracy and literacy policies seemingly reduced the opportunity for physical activity in primary schools, the Healthy Schools Programme in contrast sought to highlight the value of health enhancing behaviour. The national Healthy Schools Programme was launched in 1999 and promoted a whole-school approach to making children, parents and communities more aware of the opportunities that exist in schools for improving health (Harris, 2005). The Ofsted evaluation, *Healthy schools, healthy children?* (Ofsted, 2006), recognised that almost every school visited had responded to the increasing emphasis within health and PE based policy for widening participation in physical activity. The best health based provision in primary schools was found in those that had a qualified, specialist PE coordinator and where physical activity was integrated into the school day. Primary school teachers were also shown to value their links with local sports colleges and sports clubs as a means of developing expertise and extending provision. These themes, namely the impact of a school having a specialist PE teacher and primary teachers belonging to increasingly complex PE networks, will be evaluated in more detail throughout the thesis.

National Curriculum for Physical Education 1999

While *Excellence in Schools* (DfE, 1997) had considerable, if unintentional impact on primary PE, the New Labour Government also inherited the expectation of further reform in the shape of a five year review of the National Curriculum for the year 2000. This provided the Government with the opportunity to address their pre-election pledge and give a clear direction to education policy. The review of the curriculum was set, however, within the context of the current models of practice and traditional patterns of provision. As such, the key reference point for curriculum development was the existing statutory requirements (Penney, 1999).

There was much continuity in the activity areas included in the revised NCPE, but also a reduction in the content. Key Stage 1 maintained the expectation around the teaching of games, gymnastics and dance, while in Key Stage 2 there was some reduction, with the stipulation that five activity areas - games, gymnastics, dance, swimming and one other, would be taught. Games activities were still compulsory through to the end of Key Stage 3, while health-related activities were provided with a more central position as there was clear expectation for this aspect of learning to be included within lessons (Harris, 2005). 'Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health' was now described as one of four core strand of learning and, as such, was expected to be included within the teaching of all activity areas. This revision was interpreted by Cale and Harris (2005) as part of a movement from the Government to enhance lifelong participation and healthy lifestyles. The underlying goal was arguably to have an aspect of PE which related to the current experience in schools but also had relevance to lifelong participation in health enhancing activity (Jones & Cheetham, 2001).

Despite the increased recognition of healthy lifestyles and lifelong participation, the continued organisation of the NCPE into activity areas seemingly limited any significant change in the conception of primary PE. By categorising the subject into activity areas, the National Curriculum continued to define PE as a collection of different activities with gymnastics, dance and particularly games still dominant within primary schools. The activity based nature of the curriculum had remained a largely uncontested feature of the NCPE since its inception in 1992 and, despite the emergence of core strands of learning, this structure continued to shape the organisation of primary PE at the end of the century (Penney, 1999) .

The New Opportunities Secondary Curriculum 2007

The Government initiated another review of the national curriculum in 2005 but this time it excluded the primary age phase. The review of Key Stage 3 provision was launched with the aim of reducing prescribed content and giving teachers more flexibility to meet the needs of their children (House of Commons Children, Schools & Families Committee, 2009). The breadth of activities, and the essential skills and learning processes identified in the new secondary PE curriculum were based on the content of Curriculum 2000. But while the previous NCPE spanned both primary and secondary age phases, the publication of a newly structured secondary curriculum, without a similar overhaul of primary, meant that continuity and progression between the phases was less clear. The relationship between both phases of education, as part of a broader analysis of the networks that primary teachers belong to, will be examined in the thesis, to help understand the context in which primary PE is taught.

The publication of the secondary curriculum increased the expectation for a similar reappraisal of the primary age phase; with the Government finally commissioning a review through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2007. The Review, led

by Sir Jim Rose, commenced in 2008 and as with the reform of the secondary curriculum, was aimed at reducing prescription and increasing flexibility. Rose proposed to structure the primary curriculum under six areas of learning, with one of these being 'Understanding Physical Development, Health and wellbeing'. In this proposal PE, was positioned under the heading of health and in so doing seemingly prioritised holistic learning about exercise and health over more traditional aspects of physical skilfulness in games, gymnastics and dance. At the same time as the Government-backed Rose review, a separate and independent review of the primary curriculum was carried out by a Cambridge University based team of consultants and researchers. The Cambridge Review was not constrained in its remit and could move beyond the acceptance of current policy that framed the work of Rose. The Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2009) conceived the curriculum as being organised around eight non-hierarchical domains; with one again being 'Physical and emotional health'. The election of the new Coalition Government meant that neither of the recommendations from Rose or Cambridge would proceed, but the proposals are relevant as both documents have independently prioritised health as being a main area of learning in primary PE. This represents a distinct change in thinking about the nature and purpose of PE, and is an aspect of the study that will be considered in more detail from the perspective of those that lead and teach the subject.

The Cambridge Primary Review, also called into question the staffing model that has been in place since the nineteenth century, of having generalist teachers lead all subjects in primary schools. It was conceded that this model remains the cheaper option, but was also argued that the introduction of specialist teachers, possibly shared between schools to minimise costs, would be a more effective means of raising standards. The generalist staffing model is thought to bring a more personal relationship and understanding of the children in the class,

but also some limits to the range and depth of a teacher's subject knowledge when considering the whole curriculum. The demands of a modern curriculum may be unreasonable, and may unfairly expose teachers 'greatest vulnerability'; their subject knowledge (Alexander, 2009, p. 36). This has been a recognised weakness of the generalist system for decades. Thus, the Cambridge Primary Review argued for a full review of the accepted staffing model in relation to an analysis of the demands and requirements of a contemporary primary school. This study will aim to investigate this aspect in relation to primary PE; to establish who teaches the subject and what the consequences of this are.

The recommendation of the Cambridge Review appears to be particularly relevant coming as it did, at a time when the staffing model used to teach PE in primary schools was seemingly beginning to change. The publishing of *Raising Standards and Tackling Workload* (DfES, 2003) was presented as a move by the Government to reduce the bureaucratic burden on teachers. Subsequent changes to pay and conditions meant that from the 1st of September 2005, all qualified teachers were entitled, to have a minimum of 10% of their timetable set aside as protected, non-contact time for PPA. The obligation to provide PPA time and relieve teachers from the burden of covering absent colleagues, led the Government to increase funding for extra teachers and support staff, with the later expected to have an expanding role. High Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) were now able to cover for absent teachers, to be involved in planning and to also work with whole classes.

The introduction of PPA time effectively opened up the profession to adults other than teachers (AOTTs) and in so doing repositioned the relationship between sports coaches and curriculum time PE. PPA time added momentum to the increasing trend of having sports coaches involved in lessons. Coaches who were initially employed to deliver extra-curricular

activities were now increasingly being used to fill the PPA timetable gap through the 'teaching' of curriculum time PE (Blair & Capel, 2011; Griggs, 2008, 2010). Ofsted (2009) noted that the employment of specialist external coaches was used in a relatively small number of schools, but significantly there was a seeming acceptance of a model which had the primary PE curriculum being taught by adults other than teachers. The exact impact of the use of sports coaches to deliver primary PE is not clear and will be examined in the thesis, but Griggs (2007) noted that these coaches often specialised in one particular sport and came with little understanding of the requirements of the NCPE. This led him to conclude that 'primary pupils will have even fewer PE lessons that are concerned with maximising their learning, progress and achievement' (Griggs, 2007, p.26).

National Curriculum for Physical Education 2013

The publication of a new national curriculum was announced in January 2011, with PE originally included, along with English, maths and science, in the first phase of subjects to become statutory in September 2013. The timeframe for the review was later extended with all subjects being introduced in 2014, but the initial announcement immediately prioritised PE, placed it alongside the core subjects, and restated the intention made clear in *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010); that PE would remain as a requirement in all maintained schools. The announcements from government made it clear therefore, that PE would be a compulsory part of the primary curriculum, but did not make any explicit commitment to making the current two hour target a statutory requirement. The launch of the National Curriculum review also outlined three further proposals in relation to PE: that the expectation for all children to swim in primary schools would be maintained, that the provision of guidance on time allocated to outdoor activities would also be considered and that, once again, there would be clearer promotion of competitive sport (DfE, 2011).

The call for evidence for the curriculum review ran from January 2011 and produced a range of responses in relation to primary PE from 'key stakeholders' such as the International Council of Sports Science and Physical Education, the Association for PE, Youth Sport Trust, Sportscoach UK and Sport England. The two hour target was supported as being a useful benchmark, with the Youth Sport Trust citing research into global policy that revealed that all countries included in the study provided PE time targets. A more cautious response was noted in relation to the increasing focus on competition, with recognition of the beneficial and detrimental effect that this could have. There was broad consensus around the inclusion of swimming in primary PE, with many seeking to extend this requirement to both Key Stage 1 and 2 (Bardens, Long & Gille, 2012). Other key messages included support for the role of PE in teaching children about the importance of exercise and its effect on health, with many advocating daily physical activity in schools. Finally, there was some consensus over the proposed nature of primary PE, with its role stated as being about the development and then the application of motor skills. Core fundamental motor skills, such as running, jumping, throwing, catching, hitting and kicking, should, it was claimed, be introduced and learnt in Key Stage 1; giving emphasis to coordination, control, manipulation and movement. These basic skills should then be refined through movement and applied in increasingly challenging activities such as swimming, dancing, gymnastics and competitive team sports before the end of Key Stage 2. The response to the call for evidence showed that the 'key stakeholders' thought that the primary curriculum should be aiming to develop competence in core fundamental motor skills before putting them into practice in a sporting context (DfE, 2011b).

The new NCPE was finally published on the 11th of September 2013; becoming a statutory requirement for all maintained schools from September 2014. As expected the purpose of

study made reference to success in competitive sport and participation in activities that support health and fitness. At Key Stage 1, pupils were expected to develop fundamental movement skills, to extend their competence and confidence, and to engage in competitive and cooperative activities. More specifically team games and dance were referenced along with a more general requirement to apply skills in a range of activities. At Key Stage 2 pupils were expected to continue in their development and application of movement skills, to enjoy taking part in different contexts and to develop an understanding of how to evaluate and improve their own performance. Outdoor and adventurous activities were added to games and dance as statutory requirements; gymnastics and athletics were referred to as examples of areas in which skills can be developed, while the requirement for swimming to be compulsory in primary education remained unchanged (DfE, 2013a).

Overall the programme of study was less prescriptive in its nature, with the narrower range of statutory requirements providing greater discretion to schools in how they organised the delivery of PE. While this was broadly welcomed by the Association for PE, it was noted that as the slimmer framework does not provide a comprehensive curriculum model it will place a greater responsibility on teachers to develop a coherent programme of PE. This was noted as a potential problem for some involved in primary education as it was perceived that many lacked the necessary subject and pedagogical knowledge to do so effectively (Association for PE, 2014). The concerns about the abilities and attitudes of primary teachers towards PE will, along with their preparation to teach the subject, be examined throughout the thesis.

Policy towards sport

Since the emergence of the National Curriculum, the value of involvement in PE has been recognised by elite sport as a means of identifying and nurturing talent while also providing a

broad base of participation and support. Revision of the NCPE in 1992, 1995, 1999, 2007 and 2013, have seemingly been influenced by successive governments' sporting agenda, as team games and competitive sport have featured as an enduring and dominant aspect of the primary PE curriculum. As such, recent developments have appeared to merge the priorities of sports governing bodies with those of PE. This study will aim to examine what is taught in primary PE and how it is delivered, and understand how the influence of sport and sport policy has influenced the different approaches and content that have been adopted.

The Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy

The Government's stated aim of increasing participation in physical activity was evident in the launch of the PESSCL strategy (DfES & DCMS, 2002). This was a wide-ranging national strategy that was introduced with the largest amount of financial investment ever provided by government for PE and school sport. The Government pledged an investment of '£459 million to transform PE and school sport' (DfES/DCMS, 2003, p.1) over the following three years; with funding provided by the exchequer and the National Lottery's New Opportunities fund. The overarching aim was to promote and enhance the take up of sporting opportunities, so that '75% of 5-16-year-old children spent a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum by 2006' (DfES/DCMS, 2003, p.2).

The potential impact of the PESSCL strategy was based in the range and content of the policy itself as it brought together eight distinct but interlinked strands of work. Of these strands, Specialist Sports Colleges and SSPs played a central role in enhancing sports opportunities for all pupils by creating a national infrastructure for PE and sport. SSPs aimed to create links between families of schools to share expertise and enhance sporting opportunities. They were centred on a Specialist Sports College, which typically linked to around eight other secondary

schools and fifty primary schools, and acted as the hub of the partnership to disseminate good practice. Together these partnerships would focus on improving coordination and links between schools and clubs to increase out-of-hours opportunities for children through coaching, leadership and community sport (DfES/DCMS, 2003).

The partnership was controlled by a Partnership Development Manager (PDM), who was based in the Specialist Sports College and responsible for the strategic development of the network and creating links with other schools and organisations. The PDM worked alongside School Sport Co-ordinators (SSCos) who were the representatives of each of the secondary schools in the partnership. The SSCos were released for two days a week from their teaching role to work with partner primary schools and develop the quality of, and opportunities for, PE and school sport. The final position within the partnership was the Primary Link Teachers (PLTs), who were typically the PE SLs in their primary schools. They were released from their timetable for twelve days a year, and were expected to develop and deliver 'high quality' PE and extracurricular sport within their own school. Given that this study is based on the perceptions of SLs, the impact of partnerships will need to be examined as it is likely to have influenced how they teach and organise the subject. This is particularly relevant as their practice will to some extent have been shaped by their involvement in the complex social networks that were designed by SSPs to deliver the public service agreement and improve the quantity and quality of PE and school sport (DfES/DCMS, 2003).

There was a clear commitment towards competitive sport within the PESSCL policy. The 'Gifted and Talented' programme aimed to improve the performance of talented young sports people and encourage them to join junior sports clubs (DfES/DCMS, 2003). To this end the network of links between schools, sports club and National Governing Bodies of sport, was

designed to provide pathways for talented young people that allowed them to access higher quality competition and coaching, and support their development within sport. Up to 10% of elite primary aged school children were supported through the gifted and talented work strand (DfES/DCMS, 2003). In the PESSCL model, sport was also seen as a suitable vehicle for the promotion of health enhancing physical activity. The professional development programme that supported the delivery of PESSCL aimed to 'Improve the understanding of how high quality PE and school sport can be used to support healthy lifestyles and physical activity' (DfES/DCMS, 2003, p. 12). In this regard, the PESSCL policy continued to promote sports participation within primary schools and did so, in part, because of the supposed health benefits it would confer on children.

Along with its role in promoting sport and sports participation, investment is the PESSCL policy was also directed towards improving pupil attendance, behaviour and attainment in schools. In 2003 a £5m pilot programme was launched as part of PESSCL to impact on bullying and disruptive behaviour in 3,500 primary schools; while the professional development strand of the policy aimed to: 'improve the understanding of how high quality PE and school sport can be used as a tool for whole school improvement, particularly in terms of attendance, behaviour management and attainment' (DfES/DCMS, 2003, p. 12). These aims of raising educational attainment and contributing to whole school improvement may have been based on the rhetoric that existed around the value of the subject, but their acceptance still secured PE and school sport a role within the Government's broader political agenda. This was a very different situation to that encountered at the time of the 1988 Education Act; where the lowly status of the subject brought doubt as to whether it would even be included within the National Curriculum. Fifteen years later the attitude of politicians towards the role of PE and school sport had seemingly changed dramatically and as a

consequence PE was entering period of significant and sustained investment from central government and associated sporting bodies.

Given the overwhelming investment in the PESSCL policy, it is perhaps not surprising that government funded evaluations of its impact tends to be positive. The Youth Sport Trust Annual Review in 2006 found that 'over three quarters of primary link tutors reported that involvement in the partnership had led to an increase in the range of curriculum provision' (Youth Sport Trust, 2006, p.7). The Ofsted survey of good practice in 2006 similarly found that the 'school sport partnership programme was helping to improve the quality of provision in PE and school sport, particularly in primary schools' and that those involved had 'developed strong links with local sports clubs and sports coaches in the community, giving pupils many more opportunities to play sport outside school' (Ofsted, 2006a, p.3). The time devoted to primary PE has also ostensibly increased; by 2006 82% of primary pupils were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport in a typical week. This exceeded the Public Service Agreement target of 75% and represented a year on year rise from 69% in 2004/05 and 62% in 2003/04 (DfES, 2006). According to the Department for Education and Skills, the most marked improvements in participation rates were found in the primary phase of schooling.

The apparent success of PESSCL is claimed however, to be a consequence of the particular criteria that have been used (Hayden-Davies, 2005). Evaluations of teaching and learning in primary PE lessons are less favourable than statistics around extracurricular activity and school based competition. According to Pickup (2006) the models of PE practice observed in primary schools still varied enormously despite the investment secured through PESSCL. Teaching strategies and behaviours, frequency and duration of lessons, activity content, the

use of specialist teachers and amount of cross curricular links were all found to be at varying levels or of different quality. Perhaps most significantly, the time allocated for PE was frequently shown to be below the 2 hours a week that was consistently claimed by PESSCL (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011; Pickup, 2006). This research would suggest that while the number of extra-curricular clubs, inter-school competitions and links with community sports clubs had increased, the evidence around curriculum time primary PE was less convincing.

In examining the impact of PESSCL, a further consideration for the thesis is the unintended outcomes of the policy; particularly in the relationship between secondary and primary colleagues and in the role of sports coaches in primary schools. The top down partnership model adopted through PESSCL reinforced the perceived status of secondary PE, as resources and training were invariably invested in this sector first and then disseminated to primary. In their role as SSCos, secondary PE teachers were perceived to hold a level of expertise within this model; but while they may have had far more extensive subject based training, they would also have far less understanding of the particular challenges of teaching primary aged children. It would be misguided to assume, therefore, that secondary PE teachers would immediately adopt developmentally appropriate methods and content with younger pupils, or that they would even feel comfortable in a primary school setting.

A further potential issue of having SSCos working regularly with their feeder primary schools is that their presence in lessons becomes normalised. This may endorse a situation where the learned expectation around PE is for primary teachers to accept that other professionals are better placed to teach the subject than themselves. The introduction of PPA time in 2005 may have inadvertently coincided with PESSCL to reinforce this perception. Sports coaches who were initially employed to deliver extra-curricular activities and meet the

PESSCL 2 hour target were now in a position to lead curriculum time PE and fill the PPA timetable gap (Blair & Capel, 2011; Griggs, 2008, 2010).

The PE and Sport Strategy for Young People

The perceived success of PESSCL in meeting the public service agreement helped secure further investment in PE and school sport. PESSYP (DCSF/DCMS, 2008) was launched in 2008 with an investment of £755 million over three years. PESSYP built on the partnership model established through PESSCL and aimed to ensure that every child aged five to sixteen in England would have access to five hours of PE and sport every week; with the '5 hour offer' being made up of two hours of PE and a further three hours of extra-curricular provision.

As with PESSCL the new government strategy for PE and sport would be delivered through several interlinked strands of work, but the core funding would still be dedicated to supporting the existing network of Sports Colleges and SSPs. PESSYP also continued the theme established in PESSCL of contributing to a range of contrasting aims; be they related to participation, performance or broader social policy. Coaching schemes were targeted at areas of deprivation to provide role models for young people; sporting activities were aimed at engaging the disaffected in an attempt to combat issues relating to attendance and bullying; and schemes such as 'playing for success' were initiated to raise standards and develop numeracy and literacy through sport (DCSF/DCMS, 2008). PESSYP also targeted other cross-government initiatives with the 5 hour offer being endorsed for its potential impact on children's immediate health and fitness, while also being viewed as a means to promote lifelong participation and combat illness associated with obesity. Finally the strategy fully supported the aims of elite sport with the creation of a 'competition manager' role, to

organise school sport, and the employment of qualified sports coaches to enhance the provision of sport within the partnerships (DCSF/DCMS, 2008).

The positive impact of PESSCL on participation rates seemingly continued with the new strategy for PE and sport. The annual PE and Sport Survey (DfE, 2010a) noted that during the academic year 2009/10, 93% of years 1-2 and 95% of years 3-6 were participating in at least 120 minutes of curriculum PE. This compared to 90% and 93% respectively 2008/09. Participation in intra-school competition had also increased across the primary and secondary age ranges – from 68% in 2008/09 to 78% of pupils in 2009/10; while 21% of pupils took part in inter-school competition in 2009/10, up 2% from the previous year (DfE, 2010a). In their final summary report into SSPs, Ofsted (2011) similarly found that partnerships had a beneficial effect on PE and sport and that this was seen most clearly in primary schools. Partnerships seemingly increased participation in PE and school sport, improved the links between schools and sports clubs and played a leading role in the professional development of teachers (Ofsted, 2011).

While Ofsted and the DfE highlight the apparent success of PESSCL and PESSYP policies, the validity of the data surrounding participation in PE can, according to Harris, Cale & Musson (2011), be called into question. They cite findings that show; nearly three quarters of teachers believe their children did not achieve the 2006 target of having 75% engage in two hours of high quality PE and school sport per week. This research disputes the reliability of the Government's own evaluative data around both PESSCL and PESSYP. The use of the subjective term 'High quality' PE is an immediate issue in any accurate assessment of participation; the confusion around what to measure may account for some of the differences in the findings. A further issue in any evaluation of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies is that

the impact is most obvious in extracurricular aspects of primary school provision and less clear in relation to timetabled PE. The Ofsted report on primary PE in 2009 noted the improvements that have occurred in the subject since the inception of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies, but also highlight the variability in practice that continues to exist across a range of criteria in primary PE. The quality of teaching and learning was more variable in primary schools, with the subject knowledge of primary teachers being less secure. Inconsistencies remained in assessment with inaccuracies noted in the judgment of pupils' levels of achievement. Resources and accommodation were more varied at primary level; preparations for the PESSYP 5 hour target were inconsistent; and feedback, in regard to the length, content and quality, of primary school PE reports varied considerably. Finally while progress had been made in teaching the key strand 'knowledge and understanding of health and fitness', development of the other three National Curriculum strands was once again considered to be more varied (Ofsted, 2009).

Overall, the PESSCL and PESSYP policies have seemingly continued a trend that has been increasingly apparent since the inception of the NCPE; namely, the involvement of elite sport in the development of PE. Administrative and governing bodies of sport have looked to cultivate a closer association with PE and in doing so have provided a wealth of resources and training opportunities for those involved in the subject at a primary level. The partnership approach adopted in the PESSCL and PESSYP policies, has confirmed the relationship between PE and sport, with 'club links' being a distinct and prominent aspect of a complex policy. As such, while the PESSCL and PESSYP policies have on the whole had a seemingly positive impact and raised the status of primary PE, this has been achieved while prioritising the particular interests of sport. This is seen most significantly in the apparent acceptance of sports coaches teaching primary PE lessons and in the results of the PE and Sport Surveys;

which show that the greatest impact has been on extracurricular sporting provision. The success of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies within curriculum time PE is less clear. Notwithstanding the issue of sports coaches' involvement in PE lessons, the claims made around 'high quality' PE time have been contested, and inconsistencies, in the quality of primary PE lessons, continued to be a source of concern. These concerns will inform the research conducted for the thesis as it considers the nature and practice of primary PE.

The Coalition Government

The first White Paper on education *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010) was published by the Coalition Government in 2010 and outlined the direction of policy amongst other things in relation to primary PE. It stated that the subject would remain as a requirement in all maintained schools; that competitive team sports would be promoted within PE and that the rationale for this would be based on the 'character building' qualities that team sport supposedly develops within young people. This publication seemed to signal a return to the policy adopted by the last Conservative Government, where the 1995 NCPE along with *Sport: Raising the Game* (DNH, 1995) had an overt focus on the promotion of sport and aimed to emphasise the values attributed to traditional team games; values which will be investigated as part of the thesis.

The then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, announced the Coalition Government's more detailed approach to PE and school sport with the release of a press notice entitled *Refocusing sport in schools to build a lasting legacy of the 2012 Games* (DfE, 2010b). This outlined a major shift in policy with the announcement that the ring-fenced funding for SSPs and specialist sports colleges would be discontinued in March 2011. This marked the end of the previous administrations PE and Sports Strategy, which had secured

£2.4 billion investment over seven years, and the start of the new Coalition Government's approach which would be founded on an unequivocal aim of increasing young people's participation in competitive sport.

Gove claimed that too few children were participating in regular competitive sport and that there had been a decline in traditional team games because teachers and school sports coordinators had been overly focused on top-down targets. He cited the most recent school sport survey which showed that *only* around two in every five pupils took part in intra-school competition, while *only* one in five regularly competed against other schools. In his letter to Baroness Sue Campbell, the Chair of the Youth Sport Trust, Michael Gove concluded that 'the existing network of School Sport Partnerships is neither affordable nor likely to be the best way to help schools achieve their potential in improving competitive sport' (DfE, 2010b, p.1).

Gove also noted the expectation for schools to have embedded the good practice and collaboration that came from the PESSCL and PESSYP policies, and that they should continue to provide two hours a week of PE and sport. He claimed that he was not closing partnerships, but that by removing many of the requirements of the previous strategy he was giving schools the freedom to decide for themselves how to improve competitive sport provision. The new direction taken by government was centred on the supposed reduction of bureaucracy for schools; allowing them the freedom to organise sport for themselves rather than imposing a top down system of SSPs which they were expected to be part of (DfE, 2010b).

Michael Gove's rejection of the SSP model was based on the costs involved and on the perceived failings of the system. In citing the School Sport Survey, Gove was arguably accepting the veracity of the findings, in which case it is difficult to contest the overwhelming success of schools sport partnerships. Ofsted reported that the 'The PESSCL strategy was having a major impact on all aspects of provision for PE' (Ofsted, 2009, p.6), that the majority of primary schools provided two hours of PE and that the quality of the curriculum and pupil learning had improved. Ofsted (2013) also attributed the rise in the proportion of good or outstanding PE lessons directly to the professional development provided by SSPs. Finally, the school sport survey similarly showed that the number of extra-curricular sports clubs had increased, that links to local sports clubs were being developed and that inter-school competition was seeing a revival (DfE, 2010a).

With these findings in mind the former Shadow Education Secretary, Andy Burnham, responded to the debate on school sport funding by saying 'What we are struggling with is having to accept the Secretary of State's decision to remove 100% of their funding and demolish an entire infrastructure and proven delivery system that is improving children's lives here and now.' (House of Commons 30th November 2010, cited in Bardens, Long & Gille, 2012, p.7). Following the response of the opposition and the reaction of those involved in education and sport, along with substantial criticism in the media, a revised government policy was announced on 20 Dec 2010: *A new approach for school sports - decentralising power, incentivising competition, trusting teachers* (DfE, 2010c). Direct government funding of SSPs was now set to remain in place, allowing more time for the benefits of this policy to be embedded. An additional £65million was also to be made available to fund one day a week of a secondary PE teachers' time to enable them to work with partner primary schools as *competition managers* and develop intra-and inter-school competition. The funding would

consist of a grant of £7,600 per secondary school, for each of the two academic years up to 2013, and schools were at liberty to use their own budgets to extend this role if they wished. The Government considered this new approach to be a significant change, with less bureaucracy and imposed targets, and more decentralisation and school freedom. However, as the funding was not ring-fenced, there was no compulsion for schools to dedicate this money towards the enhancement of competitive sport in primary schools.

The Primary PE and Sport Premium

In March 2013 the Coalition Government introduced their new policy for PE and school sport: The primary *PE and Sport Premium*. This amounted to an investment of £150 million per annum, for the two academic years up to 2015. The premium, which on average amounted to £9,250 per primary school, was provided with the explicit aim of improving the provision of PE and school sport. The premium was provided directly to the schools, with the head teacher having the discretion to decide exactly how it would be spent to improve provision (DCMS & DfE, 2013).

Schools would be accountable for their spending as Ofsted would strengthen their reporting on PE and monitor the initial use of the *PE and Sport Premium*. Schools would also be required to include details of how they used the premium on their website, along with more comprehensive details of the curriculum – so that parents could assess the whole school provision for PE (DCMS & DfE, 2013). The Government's decision to invest in PE at a primary school level and to ring fence the funding was widely welcomed within primary PE, as it showed the importance of investing money where it was thought to be most needed. The *PE and Sport Premium* was the first 'bottom up' model and was seen as a response to criticisms of 'top down' PESSCL and PESSYP policies that led to secondary schools

dictating how resources would be allocated and which pedagogical approaches should be adopted in primary schools (Griggs 2007). Concern was expressed, however, as to the level of guidance that head teachers would receive in spending the money and that the investment was only initially in place for two years up to 2015. It was feared that it might be seen as a short term gimmick, rather than an effective longer term solution (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013).

This concern was addressed in 2014, when the Government announced that investment in the current policy of the *PE and Sport Premium* would be extended for a further five years up until 2020 (DCMS, DfE & Number 10, 2014). This would mean that each primary school would continue to receive direct funding of £8000 a year, plus a further £5 per pupil, to enhance the provision of sporting activities.

The initial investigation into the impact of the *PE and Sport Premium* was published by the DfE in September 2014 and showed, amongst other things, that the money was used by schools to train existing staff (86%), to buy new equipment (76%) and to provide more extracurricular sports clubs (74%). Almost three-quarters (70%) of primary schools in England reported using the Premium in 2013-14 to make changes to the staffing of curricular PE. Of these, the vast majority (82% – up from 37% the previous year) reported the use of external sport coaches to deliver curricular PE, while more than half (54% – up from 22%) increased the use of specialist PE teachers. At the same time, around two-thirds (64%) of primary schools reported making changes to the staffing of extra-curricular PE and sport. 91% of those that had made changes reported using sports coaches in this capacity (up from 56% the previous year) and 47% (up from 26%) claimed to be making use of specialist PE teachers (DfE, 2014).

The DfE (2014) survey of uses of the primary *PE and Sport Premium* in England showed that primary schools reported large-scale developments in PE between 2012/13 and 2013/14. The impact of these changes was for 84% of schools to claim an increase in 'engagement' in curricular PE, 91% to report an increase in the quality of PE teaching and 63% to state that they had increased the amount of inter-school competitive sport (DfE, 2014). These claims and the overall impact of the premium on, amongst other things, the staffing of curricular PE lessons, will be investigated within the thesis.

Summary

This section has aimed to examine the available academic and professional literature that relates to the socio-political context of primary PE. It has considered the impact of government policy that relates to primary PE, be that from an educational or sporting perspective. In doing so it has aimed to highlight some of the main developments and issues within primary PE that will be investigated in the thesis. These include themes such as, the involvement of primary teachers in increasingly complex networks, the association between sport and PE, the relationship between secondary and primary PE, the role of sports coaches in PE lessons, the impact of ITE and CPD on the preparation of primary teachers to teach PE, the prioritisation of games, and the values and status of the primary PE. Given the importance and prominence of the latter, it is this which will be considered in the next section of the literature review.

The value and status of primary PE

Having examined the historical and socio-political context of primary PE, this section will review academic literature to consider how primary PE is perceived from within the PE profession and identify the values that are associated with the subject in the primary phase of

education. This review will contribute to a further analysis of the status of primary PE and the impact that this has on the nature and practice of the subject.

The perceived values of primary PE

Sport

A consistent theme to emerge from the Coalition Government is their committment to school sport and the avowed aim of promoting more competition (DfE, 2010, 2010b, 2010c, 2011, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2013a & 2014). The rationale for this position is centred on the identification of talent for elite sport, the promotion of health and fitness and the improvement of individual and societal outcomes. The White Paper on education *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010) noted, for example, the 'character building' qualities that team sport develops within young people. Jeremy Hunt claimed that sport 'teaches young people great lessons for life. It encourages teamwork, dedication and striving to be the best that you can be' (Bardens, Long & Gille, 2012, p.7); while the Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, stated that 'Sport is a vital part of a healthy childhood. It helps in the drive against child obesity and competitive school sport offers a wide range of benefits like better self-esteem, confidence and social skills' (Bardens, Long & Gille, 2012, p.7).

From an educational perspective sport was also portrayed by the House of Commons Education Committee (2013) as having the capacity to impact on behaviour and as result influence individual and societal outcomes. Sport was thought to be able to engage disaffected children, to divert them from antisocial behaviour and to build self-esteem and confidence. This in turn was thought to improve attendance and behaviour in schools, and to ultimately bring greater academic success. It was also recognised in the same report, however, that while there was conclusive support for the more general benefit of sport in

nurturing the development of improved health, educational and societal outcomes, the evidence of such outcomes from *school* sport were still emerging (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013).

The longstanding rhetoric surrounding the claims as to the benefit of sport are so well accepted that they have been used repeatedly to direct policy, while the actual evidence base remains contested or even unexamined. The competitive element in sport, for example, raises the possibility of ill-health and injury; with greater pressure placed on children to improve performance and train at increasing levels of intensity, frequency and duration. This imposes considerable physical stress on young children who are still physically developing and growing, and makes them, according to the National Health Service, (2002) one of the most vulnerable groups to sports injury. Similarly, arguments for the supposed role of sport in promoting moral values and developing self esteem in children are undermined by the realisation that while sport can provide these experiences, it does not do so exclusively nor does it always do so successfully. It would seem that many of the claims made by government for the value of sport within PE are part of what Dunning (1992) described as the fantasy-laden thinking that characterizes ideology.

Reservations around the actual value of sport have led some to question the Government's prioritisation of competition. The consultation with key stakeholders around the new NCPE highlighted the uneasy relationship between sport and PE, with concerns expressed about the focus on competitive sport within the Government's proposals. The majority of the 1580 responses stressed the need for a balance between participation and competition, with a fear that over emphasis of the latter could have a deleterious effect on children's enjoyment of, and participation in, PE (DfE, 2011b). The promotion of competitive sport was similarly

questioned by the House of Commons Education Committee (2013) who noted that such an approach has a limited appeal for children and that many are put off and deterred by an over emphasis on competition. This is not to say that competitive sport should not in their view be included, as it was thought to bring benefits for a significant number of children, more that it needed to be balanced by the inclusion of non-competitive activities (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013).

These findings would seemingly highlight the continued lack of consensus around the relationship between sport and PE; with the prominence of sport being supported by some key stakeholders but contested by others. None the less, a more cautious perspective emerged from the consultation; one which recognises that the Government's approach may constrain the engagement of children and also the development of the subject as a whole. Primary PE in particular is seen to be a point at which there is increasing tension between adult sporting values and a more holistic concern for the development of children through play.

Recent developments in policy, particularly the new NCPE (DfE, 2013a) and the *PE and Sport Premium* (DfE, 2014) have confirmed and added to the growing dominance of competitive sport in the popular understanding of what constitutes primary PE. The perception of the subject is significant as it may lead to the acceptance of seemingly inappropriate pedagogical approaches, the further demise of non-competitive activity areas and the adoption of a more elitist model; which favours the performance of the few, rather than the participation of all. Primary PE is considered by Wright (2004) to be a fundamentally educational experience which should address the learning needs of all children rather than be a means of identifying and nurturing talent for any particular governing body of sport. The moves by government towards the prioritisation of sport will seemingly impose

adult activities and adult values on young children, with greater emphasis on more competition for the more able (Penney & Harris, 1997). This may challenge the teaching of primary PE in particular, as the greater emphasis on sport will arguably magnify the abilities of children in front of their classmates, at a time when they are thought to need security and freedom to find satisfaction in developing their own movement. In short, the play based values associated with primary PE, of freedom, exploration, creativity and enjoyment, seemingly clash with the more serious, competitive and focused approach of sport (Wright, 2004).

Health

While concerns remain around the role of sport in the relationship between health and PE, the promotion of health enhancing physical activity remains a largely accepted rationale for the place of primary PE. The House of Commons Education Committee (2013) noted the role of PE in combating what it considered to be one of the most pressing public health issues; childhood obesity. With a fifth of reception aged children being overweight or obese, rising to a third by the end of Key Stage 2 (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013), the physical activity guidelines published by the Department of Health (2011) are designed to optimise children's health and develop active lifestyles. The primary recommendation is the accumulation of one hour's physical activity per day of at least moderate intensity; with the other aims linked to strength and weight bearing activities and the avoidance of sedentary behaviour. While there is still relatively little known about young people's activity, fitness and the associated health impacts (Cale & Harris, 2005) the physical health benefits claimed for children when following these guidelines include, enhanced cardiovascular health, weight maintenance and improved bone health (DH, 2011).

While the primary recommendation, of the physical activity guidelines published by the Department of Health (2011), is one hour of physical activity per day of at least moderate intensity, the potential for primary PE lessons to contribute to this target is limited. Research by Fairclough and Stratton, (2005a, 2005b) suggests that in PE lessons, pupils spend approximately 40% of their time involved in physical activity which is of an appropriate intensity to confer health benefits and combat rising obesity. This equated to approximately 20 minutes during the average length lesson, but is likely to be less within primary schools where children need more support before, during and after the lesson (Mersh & Fairclough, 2010). The non-statutory two hour target for curriculum time PE in primary schools (Youth Sport Trust, 2012) is likely to equate therefore to less than 40 minutes of meaningful physical activity per week. This shortfall, between the Department of Health target and the actual activity time in primary PE lessons, highlights the inability of the subject to impact significantly on the immediate health of children; and has brought a change in the nature of the benefits claimed for PE. More recent studies (Collins, Martindale, Button & Sowerby, 2010; Foweather, 2010; Gallahue & Ozmun, 1998; Griggs, 2007; Jess & Collins, 2003; Jess, Gagen, McIntyre, Perkins, & McAlister, 2006) have attested instead to the desirability of using PE from a primary age to establish secure movement foundations from which lifelong participation in health enhancing physical activity can be built.

Fundamental Movement Skills

The development of fundamental movement or motor skills, such as running, catching, and kicking are consistently linked to both maturation and environmental factors. Maturation is a necessary aspect, but is not thought sufficient on its own to develop proficient motor skills as there are numerous adults who, despite being fully grown, continue to display relatively immature movement patterns. As such, skill learning is not seen as an automatic progression

that happens ‘naturally’ as we grow older, but rather is a more complex process that relies on a range of environmental factors (Bailey et al, 2009; Jess et al, 2006). In order to develop proficient movement skills, children are thought to need access to appropriate learning environments with adequate facilities and equipment; to need developmentally-appropriate activities with relevant cue information; and finally to need opportunities to practice and refine their skills with frequent encouragement, praise and feedback (Bailey et al, 2009; Foweather, 2010).

The acquisition of these fundamental skills at an early age would seem to have an associated health value, as highly skilled children are claimed to be physically active for longer and to take part in a wider range of activities than less skilled children (Foweather, 2010; Stodden, Langendorfer & Roberton, 2009; Wrotniak, Epstein, Dorn, Jones & Kondilis, 2006). It appears that skill competence is a key determinant of children’s engagement in physical activity and that, as such, it has a relationship with the health benefits that are claimed to be accrued through increased participation (Ennis, 2011).

Not only is skill competence thought to have an immediate impact on health, but it is also seen as the foundation for lifelong engagement in health enhancing physical activity (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013; Smyth, Mooney & Casey, 2014). Inadequate motor skills are thought to hinder the child’s progress in activities which demand that skill. If a child can’t throw over-arm, for example, then it is argued that they will find it difficult to take part in more complex games or activities, such as cricket, badminton or athletics, which require the same movement pattern (Jess & Collins, 2003). This failure is likely to lead to frustration and disengagement, and ultimately exclude children from participation as adults. Children, who have in contrast developed proficient motor skills, it is argued, will have wider

opportunities for successful participation in physical activities as adults. Thus, primary PE should seemingly prioritise the acquisition of fundamental movement skills, particularly as a range of literature would suggest that children's movement skills can reach a relatively mature level by the age of 8 and that the years immediately before and around this time are the most important in the motor development of young people (Collins et al, 2010; Foweather, 2010; Gallahue & Ozmun, 1998; Griggs, 2007). During the primary phase children are in the main receptive to, and developmentally capable of, motor learning; having the physical and cognitive capacity to do so (Foweather, 2010). As the significant development of these fundamental skills occurs almost entirely within the primary age range (Gallahue & Ozmun, 1998), PE seemingly has an important role to play in securing the possibility of participation across the lifespan of the primary aged child.

While it is widely believed that primary PE can be the foundation for lifelong participation in health enhancing activity, there is little actual evidence to support this claim (Evans & Davies, 2010). The teaching and learning of fundamental movement skills is seemingly a crucial part of developing the proficiency needed to access and maintain involvement with physical activity, but this supposition is part of widely accepted claim that exposure to PE at a young age ultimately increases participation as an adult (Green, 2014). The belief in the capacity of PE to have such a favourable impact on lifelong participation in health enhancing activity has come to be accepted at all levels and even forms part of the rationale for the new NCPE (DfE, 2013a). While this 'PE effect' may be viewed as a common sense assumption, it is seen by Green (2014) to be based on little actual evidence. As such, he advocates the need for more extensive research to understand the complexities involved in the role of PE in promoting lifelong participation.

The perceptions of the SLs will be examined as part of the study to establish their views on the value of primary PE. It is clear, however, that the current government has put a strong emphasis on sport through the School Games initiative, the *PE and Sport Premium* (DfE, 2014) and the content of the revised NCPE (DfE, 2013a). The explicit prioritisation of sport has even been confirmed in parliament, with the MP Tim Loughton stating that 'all pupils aged five to 16 will play competitive sport, without exception' (Bardens, Long & Gille, 2012, p.17). Concern has been expressed, however, over the relationship between sport and PE, with the national curriculum review bringing calls for a more measured approach that balances the value of competitive sport alongside a need for wider participation (DfE, 2011b). Nonetheless sport is seemingly guaranteed a more central role in the future of primary PE with the justification for this approach being based in part on a questionable 'character building' rationale. While this thinking is contested there is some consensus within primary PE as to the role of fundamental movement skill learning; although the evidence base may still be questioned. The values attributed to primary PE, therefore, reflect those of the subject in general, but are also different in that there is a greater recognition that primary education provides the starting point and foundation for all that follows. As such, primary PE is identified (by much of the academic literature at the least) as an important and appropriate time for the development of fundamental movement skills as a basis for lifelong participation in physical activity.

The Status of Primary Physical Education

In contrast to the primary based research which relates to the relative value of the subject, further study in this area expresses concern about the perceived issues in the status of primary PE (Pickup, 2006; Smith, 2013; Griggs, 2007, 2010). The comparatively low status of PE is highlighted by Griggs (2007) who states that 'primary PE is in a state of neglect and that

relatively little attention is given to it' (p.58). The long standing concerns for the status of the subject were illustrated by the outcome of the 1988 Education Reform Act which announced the publication of the first National Curriculum. The inclusion of PE in the statutory orders secured its immediate future and reaffirmed its place; but as the last subject to be included, the Education Reform Act also marked and arguably exacerbated the low status of PE.

Despite the immediate and ongoing impact of the 1988 Education reform Act, subsequent revisions of the national curriculum have all secured the place of PE and indeed ensured that it has remained as one of the only subjects to be mandatory from Key Stage 1 to 4. The more recent announcement for a comprehensive review of the curriculum in January 2011 initially included PE along with English, maths and science in the first phase of subjects to become statutory in September 2013. The timeframe for the review was later extended with all subjects being introduced in 2014, but the initial announcement arguably gave PE greater status by placing it alongside the core subjects (DfE, 2011).

The launch of PESSCL in 2003 would also appear to demonstrate the value attributed to PE, in general, by central government. This was the first national strategy of its kind and represented an investment of £459 million over the following three years (DfES/DCMS, 2003). In 2008, PESSYP was launched to build on and replace the existing PESSCL strategy, with a similar spending of £755 million over three years (DCSF/DCMS, 2008). Government investment in the PESSCL and PESSYP policies, according to the DCSF (2008), would total more than £2.2 billion in the eight years from 2003 to 2011; and represented the largest financial investment in PE and school sport ever made by government.

One outcome of this government investment is that the curriculum time allocated to PE has ostensibly increased quite dramatically since the end of the 1990s. At this point, annual National Curriculum tests (which are often referred to as SATs or Standard Attainment Tests) in the core subjects and the introduction of numeracy and literacy hours meant that the foundation subjects were marginalised and left to compete for the remaining curriculum time (Griggs, 2010). The *Young people and sport national survey 1999,* noted for example that; 'over a third of our 6 to 8 year olds are doing less than an hour a week of PE' (Rowe & Champion, 2000, p.24). By 2006 however, 82% of primary pupils were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport in a typical week; up from 62% in 2003/04 (DfES, 2006). By 2009 Ofsted stated that the vast majority of primary schools provided two hours of PE in the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 (Ofsted, 2009) and by 2010, 93% of years 1-2 and 95% of years 3-6 were participating in at least 120 minutes of curriculum PE (DfE, 2010a). The most marked improvements in participation rates following the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies were claimed to be in the primary phase of schooling (DfE, 2010a).

More recently, the Coalition Government continued to invest in PE by funding the new School Games. This initiative was announced, with £14 million from the Department for Health and £35.5 million of Lottery money being allocated to the development of the competition up to 2015 (DfE, 2010c). In addition, and more significantly, the Coalition Government also announced that it would invest £150 million per annum to improve the provision of primary PE and school sport up until 2020 (DCMS, DfE & Number 10, 2014). While the total level of spending on the *PE and Sport Premium* is not comparable to that of the labour administration, it still represents significant and ongoing investment in PE on the part of government during a time of economic recession.

PE and school sport has secured considerable financial investment from central government in the period since 2003, showing that the status of the subject as a whole has seemingly remained comparatively high. However, within this overall picture concerns still remain. Part of the rationale for the *PE and Sport Premium* may have been to improve the status of primary PE, but the way head teachers choose to spend the funding might unintentionally undermine its position. Initial findings reveal that 70% of primary schools in England reported using the Premium in 2013-14 to make changes to the staffing of curricular PE. Of these, 82% (up from 37% the previous year) reported employing external sport coaches to teach PE lessons (DfE, 2014). The use of sports coaches in this way is likely to undermine the status of PE at a primary and even secondary level, as it establishes the notion that unlike other subjects you don't need a teaching qualification to teach PE.

The shortcomings evident in the training of primary generalist teachers are also thought to be a factor in the greater use of external sports coaches to lead curriculum time PE (Pickup, 2006). The minimal and declining allocation of training time for primary PE has inevitably brought concern over the inadequate basic preparation for classroom teachers in the teaching of PE (Blair & Capel, 2008; Caldecott, Warburton & Waring, 2006; Griggs, 2008; House of Commons Education Committee, 2013; Harris, Cale & Musson 2011, Pickup, 2006). While policies such as PESSCL and PESSYP, extended hours, PPA time and the *PE and Sport Premium* have all to some extent led to the increasing use of sports coaches; the lack of confidence and competence on the part of primary generalists is also likely to contribute to their willingness to hand over PE lessons (Griggs 2008). The limited amount of time dedicated to PE in ITE and the realisation that teaching the subject in school can quite often

be avoided, is likely to add to the perception that PE doesn't hold the same status as other subjects within primary education.

Summary

Overall, the extent of investment in PE during the course of the 21st century and its ongoing inclusion in the national curriculum would suggest that the subject is valued by government at least. PE is universally included in school timetables because of the statutory requirements of the national curriculum, but its comparatively low status in relation to core subjects inevitably makes it vulnerable to being marginalised in practice. The substantial investment in PE has also seemingly been directed towards, and had greatest impact on, extracurricular sport. In this regard it may be appropriate to conceive the status of school sport as being more secure than that of curriculum time PE. The relationship between PE and sport, and the status of the subject in general, will be revisited throughout the thesis.

The teaching, content and organisation of primary PE

Having examined the context in which primary PE is taught, the final section of the chapter will conclude by reviewing the academic literature that helps explain what is taught in primary PE, who teaches it and how it is taught. This final section will begin to elaborate on, and draw together, some of the themes identified up to this point within the review of literature; to help establish the state of knowledge regarding the nature and practice of primary PE.

What is taught in relation to primary PE and how is it organised?

In primary schools the entitlement for two hours of PE and school sport a week is a well-established government aspiration. This was first noted in *Schools Achieving Success*, with

the clear statement that 'We will implement our promise of an entitlement of two hours of high quality PE and sport each week in and out of school for all children' (DfES, 2001, p.28). This announcement came at a time when an investigation of 228 primary schools found that over half offered only one PE lesson a week; many of which were only half an hour in duration (Warburton, 2001). The minimal time allocated to PE at this point was largely attributed to the inability of PE practitioners to defend the subject on the basis of its educational value. Primary head teachers largely allocated curriculum time at their own discretion and given the demands of meeting national targets in numeracy and literacy, and of being accountable for raising academic standards, PE inevitably suffered (Whelan, 1999). Thus, PE was often marginalised in practice and given minimal curriculum time.

The squeezing of PE curriculum time was seemingly reversed, with the publication of *Schools Achieving Success* (DfES, 2001); as this document outlined the overarching two hour target of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies which followed under the New Labour administration. The impact of these policies was noted by Ofsted, who stated that the vast majority of primary schools provided two hours of PE in the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 (Ofsted, 2009). The requirement to record the time devoted to PE was removed in 2010 and, as such, the last PE and Sport Survey from 2009/10 is the most recent official measure. At this point, 93% of years 1-2 and 95% of years 3-6 were thought to be participating in at least 120 minutes of curriculum PE each week (DfE, 2010a). While the exact findings of the PE and Sport survey might be questioned, it is clear that PESSCL and PESSYP policies did have a favourable impact on participation, and that the 2 hour target has helped secure more curriculum time for PE.

More recent government pronouncements have, however, moved away from the two hour target that was introduced in *Schools Achieving Success* (DfES, 2001). The Ofsted report *Beyond 2012 – outstanding physical education for all* (Ofsted, 2013, p.5) states that there is no statutory requirement for schools to devote a specific amount of time to PE, and that two hours was an aspirational target introduced by the previous administration. This echoed a statement made by the Department for Education in 2012 noting that this aspiration was 'unenforceable' and, as such, could only be seen as a voluntary target. This statement did at the same time, however, confirm the secretary of state's previous expectation; for every school to have embedded the good practice and collaboration that came from PESSCL and PESSYP and to maintain their current levels of provision (DfE, 2012a).

While the Government has adopted a softer position on the two hour target it is still arguably seen to be a recognised standard for primary PE. The School Games kite mark has the stated aim that schools provide at least two hours of curriculum time PE a week if they are to gain accreditation from the first bronze level upwards (Youth Sport Trust, 2012). Similarly Ofsted still report on this measure, with one of the key findings from the 2013 subject inspection being that most primary schools provided two hours of PE each week (Ofsted, 2013).

Activity areas

Despite some reservations as to the accuracy of the figures, it appears that the amount of PE and school sport has increased since the inception of PESSCL in 2003. The nature of the activities included within this has, however, been shaped by the organisation of the NCPE into activity areas. The new curriculum, which was introduced in September 2014 (DfE, 2013a), is not organised as strictly into discrete blocks of activity areas, but still has clear expectations around what should be taught at each Key Stage. Games and dance are to be

taught at both Key Stage 1 and 2; while outdoor and adventurous activities, athletics and gymnastics are mentioned in Key Stage 2. Swimming can also feature in both Key Stages.

The organisation of the PE curriculum into six activity areas can be traced back to the 'Physical Training' manuals that were made available at the start of the twentieth century, with the 1933 edition establishing a pattern of provision that has endured until the current day (Ward, 2013; Ward and Griggs, 2011). The organisation of the subject in this way has led to PE being planned and delivered as discrete blocks, with games being by far the most dominant activity. Waring, Warburton and Coy (2007) found that 61% of lessons were games based, with the timetable often divided so that one lesson was devoted entirely to games and the other to the remaining five activity areas. The firmly established tradition of playing games is a commonly noted feature of PE, and reflects its position within successive revisions of the NCPE as the dominant activity area (Ofsted, 2005; Griggs, 2008; Ward, 2013). The prominence of a traditional games based curriculum is also consistent with, and reinforced by, the role of competitive sport in extracurricular provision. The advent of PESSCL and PESSYP policies, and the *PE and Sport Premium,* has brought more complex partnerships that have enabled the organisation of more frequent and often hierarchical inter-school sporting competitions. Competitive games activities are well established at the heart of primary PE lessons and extracurricular school sport.

While games activities were, and still are, dominant within PE, the Coalition Government were critical of any movement away from the traditional conception of the subject (DfE, 2012a). They discounted the value of non-traditional alternative activities which had been promoted through the previous administration's PESSCL and PESSYP policies, as they were thought to undermine participation in team games. This theme was also evident in some areas

of the popular press, with the teaching of activities such as sports hall athletics, yoga, quicksticks hockey, cheerleading and circus skills being derided for lacking the value of traditional games. The derision of alternative activities was, however, contradicted by the findings of Ofsted who noted that that the '…wide range of traditional and alternative activities, competitions and festivals had significantly improved curricular and enrichment provision. This combination of competitive and non-competitive activities increased pupils' enjoyment and achievement in PE' (Ofsted, 2013, p.21). They went on to identify karate, street-dance, speed-stacking and cheerleading as examples of the activities available in the 'vast majority of schools' and noted that this diversity 'enabled pupils of all abilities and interests to participate' (p.23).

By stating the value of alternative activities, the most recent Ofsted subject report (2013) seemingly contradicts pronouncements made by the Department for Education (2012a). The Ofsted report recognises the levels of participation, enjoyment and attainment that were achieved by combining traditional and alternate activities within the PE curriculum. The Coalition Government preferred, however, to prioritise a more traditional approach, by making competitive sport compulsory and establishing the Schools Games to promote further intra and inter-school competition (DfE, 2012a).

Swimming

Competitive sport has been a consistent priority for successive governments in the twenty first century and has been promoted along with swimming as a mainstay of the new NCPE. In 2012, the children's Minister Tim Loughton addressed the Association for PE conference and stated that 'we are clear we want PE, swimming and competitive sport to be a compulsory part of the curriculum at each of the four Key Stages' (Loughton, 2012).

In reality the publication of the NCPE (DfE, 2013a) revealed that 'competition' would be a necessity at all four Key Stages, but that swimming would only feature as a statutory requirement in the primary age phase. The expectations around swimming were broadly consistent with the previous NCPE, as lessons could be introduced at either Key Stage 1 or 2, but the target remained for all children to be able to swim a 25 meter length unaided by the end of year 6.

A survey conducted for the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) in 2013, found, however, that 51% of seven to eleven year olds could not meet the NCPE target of being able to swim 25 meters. Moreover this report also found that the average state school pupil spends 8 hours a year in swimming lessons. This is considerably less than the 22 hours that is thought to be required to teach the content of the Key Stage 2 swimming curriculum (ASA, 2013). This is perhaps not an unreasonable estimate of the time required, given that the NCPE states that children should be taught to 'swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 meters', 'use a range of strokes effectively' and 'perform self-rescue' (DfE, 2013a, p.222)

Ofsted (2013) similarly endorsed the NCPE requirement for every pupil to be able to swim at least 25 meters by the time they finished primary education and stated this as a recommendation for primary school leaders. They also noted that almost all schools made provision for swimming in Key Stage 2 and that, in contrast to the ASA, 'Most schools ensured that all pupils met national requirements for swimming by the end of Year 6' (Ofsted, 2013, p.13). In the few cases where pupils were unable to meet the 25 meter requirement Ofsted cited inadequate opportunities for learning because of difficulties in

accessing sufficient pool time. The time devoted to PE lessons and the content of the curriculum in general, will be examined further as part of this study.

Who teaches primary PE?

Primary PE lessons are taught by three different groups of educators: generalist classroom teachers, specialist primary PE teachers and adults other than teachers – in this context sports coaches. Generalists are qualified primary teachers who teach all national curriculum subjects to their class of children. Specialists are also qualified teachers, who will have experienced some additional training in PE and may take on greater responsibility for the teaching of the subject. Finally, sports coaches, are not qualified teachers, but do typically have coaching awards which enable them to deliver extra-curricular sporting activities and, in some cases, lead PE lessons. This section will examine the context in which sports coaches have assumed greater responsibility for teaching the subject, before analysing the literature which relates to the relative strengths and weaknesses of the three models that are used to teach PE in primary schools.

The generalist teacher model, where a class of children are taught the whole of the curriculum by one teacher, has been in place in primary schools since the nineteenth century. The traditional generalist model has, however, been challenged within primary PE in recent years, with the greater inclusion of specialist teachers and, in particular, sports coaches (Blair & Capel, 2011). The extent to which sports coaches have assumed responsibility for teaching PE in primary schools is not clear. In 2004, Sports Coach UK believed that there were as many as 138,000 adults other than teachers delivering ‘sports sessions’ within primary schools (Sports Coach UK, 2004). This figure has supposedly increased significantly, with Lavin, Swindlehurst, and Foster (2008) stating that 86% of English primary schools in their

sample were using sports coaches in some capacity within PE lessons. Griggs (2008) also claimed that almost three quarters of sports coaches who worked in some capacity in primary schools, now took responsibility for teaching PE lessons, while Rainer et al (2012) noted the potential gap in provision that could be filled by coaches, with 36% of Welsh primary schools not having a specialist PE teacher amongst their staff. In contrast to these findings, which suggest that the use of sports coaches is well established in primary PE, Ofsted still maintain that this practice is limited to a relatively small number of primary schools (Ofsted, 2009). The most recent Ofsted subject report noted that 'A small minority of schools visited employed sports coaches to teach PE' (Ofsted, 2013, p.19).

These contrasting findings show that the extent to which sports coaches are employed by primary schools to teach PE lessons is not clear. The reasons for this will be examined further in the study, but some of the uncertainty may arise from the flexible way in which coaches are included within lessons. There is no distinction between voluntary or paid coaches; between coaches leading or supporting the teaching of the lesson; or between one off 'taster' sessions and more regular provision. Given the varied ways in which sports coaches can be included within PE lessons it is not surprising that some ambiguity surrounds any measure of their involvement. The flexible and sometime haphazard employment of sports coaches may also explain why Ofsted have a different understanding of the extent of their use. Schools may prefer teachers to lead PE lessons during an Ofsted inspection, and in so doing inadvertently give an inaccurate picture of who teaches the subject.

While the extent of sports coaches' involvement in lessons is unclear, it is increasingly likely for the primary PE curriculum to be taught by adults who are not qualified teachers. The reasons for this are relatively complex and varied, but can, according to Smith (2013), be

traced back to the involvement of governments in PE; especially in relation to the protracted disputes that followed the 1988 Education Act. The introduction of the NCPE established a level of government intervention in the subject that was to continue over the following decades. The pattern of involvement was more apparent in the way that control was exerted over extracurricular sport, with, for example, specialist sports colleges and the activemark award being introduced in the 1990s to promote greater participation in school sport (Smith, 2013). This pattern continued with the New Labour Government, whose own interventions were organised around the PE and School Sport policies of 2002 and 2008, which targeted two and then five hours of PE and extracurricular sport each week for school aged children. One outcome of government involvement in PE, through policies which promoted extracurricular sports, was to create an environment where teachers needed additional support to provide further opportunities for children. Thus, sports coaches were increasingly employed to assist teachers in providing a wider range of extracurricular sport. The need for additional support staff, often in the form of sports coaches, was added to by the extended services agenda which aimed to recruit more adults into the children's workforce (DfES, 2005). This policy committed schools to the provision of 'wraparound' childcare at either end of the school day, and as this provision often included the opportunity for engagement in more sport, it consolidated the acceptance of sports coaches as part of the broader workforce of primary schools (DfE, 2011c).

Successive government policies, that have promoted extracurricular sport and introduced the extended services agreement, have established conditions where the inclusion of sports coaches within the primary school workforce has been normalised. Sports coaches were given some responsibility for extracurricular sport and were seemingly accepted in this role in schools. The capacity in which sports coaches are employed has changed, however, as

while they were initially included to contribute to extracurricular sport, they are increasingly being given responsibility for teaching curriculum time PE (Blair and Capel 2008, Griggs, 2010). This shift in provision has been augmented by the entitlement, in place since 2005, for teachers to have protected time for 'planning preparation and assessment' (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011). The introduction of 'PPA time', which amounts to ten per cent of a teachers' timetable, brought the necessity for the employment of more staff in schools to ensure that all lessons were covered while teachers had this entitlement. Head teachers were faced with the difficulty of managing their budgets while also investing in additional staff to cover PPA time. Sports coaches, who were already known and associated with schools through their extracurricular work, were recognised as a relatively cheap and flexible means of providing additional staffing (Griggs, 2010). As such, it is increasingly likely that sport coaches who were initially employed to lead extracurricular sport have, to some extent, also been given responsibility for teaching curricular time PE.

Government policies, since the 1988 Education Act, have unintentionally established conditions where it has become possible for sports coaches to lead extracurricular sport and to also teach curriculum time PE. While sports coaches are well established within primary education, as support staff that may have some responsibility for both extracurricular and curricular time PE (Green, 2008), specialist teachers and generalist classroom teachers are also still involved in delivering the subject. The thesis will examine the merits of these different teaching models, particularly as the changing pattern of provision around curriculum time PE is a contentious development – as apparently unqualified adults are teaching the subject. The next section will begin this analysis by examining the literature which relates to the relative strengths and weaknesses of the three models that are used to teach PE in primary schools.

Staffing models for primary PE

The generalist approach is thought to have clear advantages over other models. Generalist teachers have greater knowledge of the pupils as individuals; they know their particular circumstances and their profile of achievement across the whole curriculum. This personal insight ostensibly enables them to choose inclusive and developmentally appropriate learning activities based on the needs of the children. It also supposedly allows them to establish a non-threatening learning environment based on the secure relationship that they have with their pupils. According to Wright (2004, p.161) the primary class teacher is by far and away the best person to teach PE as they have the 'personal knowledge of the children as children, with their individual needs and abilities'.

Generalist teachers also have an established position within the school, which allows a level of flexibility and control over the selection of teaching strategies, content of the curriculum and learning environment. This flexibility and control enables cross curricular approaches or topic work that incorporates and reinforces elements of PE through daily use. In spite of their supposed lower level of PE specific subject knowledge, generalist teachers are also thought to have a different form of professional knowledge and standing. The understanding that they have of the children within their class, the pedagogical skills they poses as qualified teachers, coupled with the flexibility that comes with their role would seemingly position generalists as potentially being ideal teachers of primary PE.

Education has, however, changed dramatically since the inception of universal free schooling; class sizes are smaller and the curriculum has become broader and more complex, with increasing external demands made on teachers to secure pupil progress. Given the burden of testing and the wider demands of a broad curriculum, it is perhaps now

unreasonable to expect primary generalists to have the expertise needed to teach all subject areas. Primary PE teachers' poor subject knowledge is a recurring theme within Ofsted reports (2005, 2009 & 2013); a failing that is often attributed to deficiencies in initial and ongoing teacher education (Fletcher & Casey, 2014; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012) and the general low status of the subject. With limited training and other considerable demands on their time, the competence of generalist primary teachers is often thought to be the weakness in primary PE (Elliot et al, 2013). As such, concerns have been consistently raised as to whether they have the subject knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm to teach the subject effectively (Green, 2002; Griggs, 2007; Keay 2011; Pickup, 2006; Sloan, 2010; Talbot, 2007; Tsangaridou, 2012)

The creation of a PLT role, within the PESSCL strategy, was one attempt to address this issue by giving 12 days of additional specialist training a year to an existing teacher who was responsible for the development and delivery of 'high quality' PE and sport in their own school. This policy built on and reinforced the idea of having a PE co-ordinator within the school who led the planning and assessment of the subject and also disseminated good practice. Ofsted (2009) noted that some primary schools took this model even further and used a teacher with specialist knowledge to lead all of the PE lessons. Where this model was used higher standards and better progress were generally achieved. The use of a qualified specialist was thought to be a more suitable approach within primary PE, as the teacher would have extensive general teacher training along with real expertise in the subject area (Caldecott, Warburton & Waring, 2006).

While the use of a specialist teacher would undoubtedly bring expertise, concerns remain that the full integration of this model would compromise a perceived strength of the primary

system; of having the same teacher delivering the curriculum as a whole, making the links between different aspects of the curriculum and understanding the individual needs of the pupils (Caldecott, Warburton & Waring, 2006). A further concern is expressed by Pickup (2006) that the adoption of specialist teachers would further diminish the status of the subject in the eyes of the generalist class teacher. Despite these reservations, The Cambridge Primary Review (Hofkins & Northen, 2009) argued in favour of subject specialist PE teachers in primary schools as a means of addressing primary teachers 'greatest vulnerability'; their subject knowledge. They argue that 'every school must have access to the expertise needed in order to plan and teach to a high-standard every aspect of the broad curriculum to which children are entitled' (Hofkins & Northen, 2009, p.37).

Another way in which schools are introducing specialism into PE it through the use of sports coaches. As discussed previously, more recent policy changes have established conditions where the inclusion of sports coaches in the wider school workforce has been normalised. Not only has the use of coaches to deliver extracurricular sport become largely accepted, but increasingly they are also being used to teach primary PE lessons.

As with the use of specialist PE teachers within primary schools, there is the same level of concern around the loss of the strengths of the generalist system when considering the impact of the use of sports coaches. There is also the fear that removing the responsibility for the subject from generalist teachers will potentially erode the status of PE (Wilkinson & Penney, 2014) and lead to a gradual loss of PE teaching skills (Keay & Spence, 2012). To compound the problem of adequate pedagogical skills, coaches tend to come with expertise in one, games based sport; typically football (Griggs, 2008). This raises questions as to their level of qualification (Pickup, 2006; Blair & Capel, 2011) and the extent to which they will be

capable of teaching the full breadth of the NCPE, particularly when it includes a range of activity areas which may be unfamiliar to them. The lack of specific teacher training is also likely to explain why coaches tended to have weaker pedagogical skills (Blair & Capel, 2013; Ofsted, 2009; Smith 2013). Griggs (2008, 2010) noted that deficiencies in fundamental training led to limitations, in teaching styles, behaviour management, knowledge of the curriculum and of the children themselves.

A further concern is that recent policy within primary PE has reinforced the relationship between PE and school sport, with the terminology often conflated by policy makers who frequently use the terms interchangeably (Ward & Griggs, 2011). This interpretation is also often evident in the practice of coaches who prioritise skill learning (Ofsted, 2009, Blair & Capel, 2011) and neglect other aspects of the NCPE which don't relate to the traditional coaching model (Griggs, 2008; Blair & Capel, 2013). Thus, the perceived risk is that primary PE lessons become a simplified version of adult games, rather than a coherent programme of developmentally appropriate movement and learning experiences.

While concerns have been expressed from within the PE profession about the use of sports coaches in primary PE lessons, it must also be noted that some of those who are critical of the model may also be directly influenced by its successful adoption. Coaches do bring specialist subject expertise which helps pupils to acquire and develop skills (Ofsted, 2009) and when they work collaboratively with teachers they are thought to make an 'excellent contribution towards raising achievement' (Ofsted, 2013, p.19). Coaches are thought to have a positive impact on participation and engagement (Smith, 2013) and there is also evidence of good practice in planning, subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their work (Griggs, 2008). It is argued that the shift in delivery does more harm than good (Ward & Griggs, 2011) but given

some of the persistent issues and at times considerable limitations found within primary PE, it can't be accepted that this is always the case; at least not in the short term.

In summary, while the educational benefits may be questionable, it would seem that policies such as PESSCL and PESSYP, extended services and PPA time have unintentionally led to a situation where sports coaches are not only used to provide extracurricular clubs and activities, but are increasingly used in curriculum time too. Financially this is certainly a cheaper option for schools and, while it may have far reaching implications for the PE profession, it seems to be a trend that is likely to continue. One aspect that has added momentum to the use of sports coaches within the curriculum is the apparent willingness of generalist teachers to hand over their teaching of primary PE. The reasons for their indifference towards the teaching of the subject are thought to be influenced by the limitations in ITE and CPD. It is this issue which will now be examined in more detail.

Initial teacher education

The preparation of primary school classroom teachers to teach PE has long been a cause of concern for the PE profession, with research showing a steady decline in time allocated to PE within ITE over the last 15 years. In 1996 Carney and Armstrong (1996) found that undergraduate ITE courses delivered on average 33 hours of PE specific training, and postgraduate courses 21 hours. By 2006, Caldecott, Warburton and Waring (2006) noted a decline in provision, with undergraduate courses only offering approximately 20 hours of PE training and postgraduate courses 15. In 2007 The Association for PE estimated that almost half (40%) of newly qualified Primary teachers received only six hours or less of dedicated PE training. This research led the then Chief Executive of the Association for PE, Margaret Talbot, to state that in relation to primary PE training, 'preparation is often totally inadequate'

(Talbot, 2007, p.1). More recently Harris, Cale and Musson (2011) and Fletcher and Casey (2014) have again noted the poor provision within primary ITE and the House of Commons Education Committee (2013) have recognised that on some postgraduate courses only one day of training was allocated to PE.

The minimal and declining allocation of training time for primary PE has brought concerns over the inadequate basic preparation for classroom teachers in teaching the subject. As a result many new teachers are thought to lack the confidence, subject knowledge and specialist skills needed to teach PE effectively (Blair & Capel, 2008, 2011; Caldecott, Warburton & Waring, 2006; Fletcher & Casey, 2014; Griggs, 2008; Harris, Cale & Musson 2011; Keay, 2011: Ofsted, 2005, 2009, 2013; Pickup, 2006; Smith, 2013; Ward, 2013). These concerns are compounded by the nature of provision which is biased towards games, gymnastics and dance. The prioritisation of these activity areas within ITE means that little if any time is given to athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities; and that trainees enter the profession with at best a partial understanding of the NCPE (Caldecott, Warburton & Waring, 2006).

The minimal time for University based ITE has also compromised the quality of teacher education as it fuels the needs of pre-service teachers to 'collect' activities which they can then replicate in their own teaching. More superficial and short term approaches are thought to prevail as the practical constraints faced by teacher educators leads to a disconnection between their aspirations and the needs of pre-service teachers. In short, the immediate pressure of ITE means that the opportunity for pre-services teachers to develop a deeper pedagogical understanding of different teaching models is lost (Fletcher & Casey, 2014). ITE is not however, only dependant on the University based provision as the vocational nature of

these courses means that the majority of training is housed within partner schools. This can lead to a phenomena first identified by Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981, cited in Pickup, 2006), of 'Washout'; where any positive effects of taught courses in PE are at risk of being lost in schools.

Provision of school based PE training was found by Pickup (2006) to be variable, with some trainees bringing a level of expertise and enthusiasm into schools and being given regular opportunities to teach and receive feedback in PE. In other circumstances, trainees' reluctance to engage with the subject was endorsed by class teachers who preferred to focus on other aspects of the curriculum. Overall, teachers' prioritisation of classroom based work coupled with, at times, a lack of enthusiasm for PE, meant that unless trainees requested it there were often very limited opportunities to teach the subject. Moreover in some circumstances trainees' expectation and willingness to engage with the subject was undermined by the negative attitude of the class teacher that they were placed alongside. It would seem that the generally positive experiences that primary trainees' had of University based PE training were commonly superseded by some negative experiences in schools; experiences that may also shape their emerging identity and practice as primary teachers (Pickup, 2006).

It would seem therefore, that there are endemic and longstanding problems in the system that is designed to train generalist primary teachers. The dominance of core subjects, particularly English and mathematics, means comparatively little time or attention is given to PE and that generalists are dissuaded from engaging equally in all aspects of the curriculum. This deficiency is often cited as being the long standing cause of teachers' shortcomings in relation to PE, with concerns commonly expressed around subject knowledge, assessment

and the ability to teach gymnastics and dance (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011; Ofsted, 2009, 2013).

The well-established issues relating to ITE and the considerable range of subject knowledge associated with primary school PE (Ofsted, 2009, Keay, 2011), often leaves new teachers with a wide range of professional development needs when they enter the profession (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011, 2012). The TOPs programme was one approach to CPD that was developed by the Youth Sport Trust as a response to concerns over the quality of primary PE teaching (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011, 2012). The programme was initially introduced with two courses; TOP Play and TOP Sport. The former was designed for 4 to 9 year olds and concentrated on fundamental motor skills, while the latter, TOP Sport, was aimed at developing the sport specific skills of 7 to 11 year olds. While TOPs was introduced in 1996, a revised version was published to coincide with the new NCPE in 2002, before a further restructuring saw its integration into the professional development work strand of the PESSCL (DfES/DCMS, 2002) policy in 2005.

An evaluation of the programme completed by Harris, Cale & Musson (2011, 2012) showed that the TOPs courses were valued by primary teachers as being relevant in developing subject knowledge and competence, and were also shown to alter perceptions of the subject; bringing greater enthusiasm for PE and an awareness of the potential contribution PE could make to the broader school agenda. While TOPs offered many valuable aspects of CPD it was also seen as something of a missed opportunity as it failed to address some of the long standing issues in primary PE, particularly in relation to persistent weaknesses in planning and assessment. The programme of CPD initiated through TOPs was seen to be over reliant on resources and lacking in opportunities for on-going training (Harris, Cale & Musson,

2011, 2012). As such, TOPs was seen to be typical of CPD which centred on developing subject knowledge through lesson content and skill progressions, but ultimately failed to move beyond this and provide a coherent programme of more relevant teacher education (Casey, 2012; Ward & Griggs, 2011). It was deemed useful for less experienced generalist classroom teachers, but was not sufficient to compensate for some of the long standing inadequacies in teacher training (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011, 2012).

While these findings highlighted weaknesses in traditional forms of CPD, the House of Commons Education Committee (2013) argued that this would still be an effective use of the primary *PE and Sport Premium*. They concluded that CPD would be the best use of the premium, as it would represent a longer term investment in the subject and also because it would address the main weakness in primary PE; the competence and confidence of the teaching staff. The use of the *PE and Sport Premium* in this way could improve what is currently seen to be quite limited access to CPD (Keay, 2011). Many primary schools have a small number of staff and, as such, it can be difficult to release teachers to attend CPD as suitable supply cover has to be found and paid for (Armour & Duncombe, 2004). The *PE and Sport Premium* could be used in this way to minimise disruption to pupils' learning, but this would not overcome some of the issues associated with the CPD itself. It is recognised that there needs to be greater access to support for qualified teachers and also more effective ways of developing their competence and confidence in teaching PE lessons (Casey, 2012; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011).

The ability of teachers to deliver consistently 'high quality' and developmentally appropriate lessons is seen as the key to ensuring children's progress in PE (Jess & Dewar, 2008). Generalist primary teachers are often restricted in their ability to provide such experiences by

the limitations of initial and continuing subject based training. This situation has led to calls to review the time allocated to PE in ITE (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013; Ofsted, 2009, 2013); to reconsider the traditional skill based approach of CPD (Casey, 2012; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011; Keay, 2011; Ward & Griggs, 2011); and to re-evaluate the overall generalist system used in primary schools (Hofkins & Northen, 2009). The latter would seem particularly relevant, as it would potentially overcome some of the issues relating to generalist class teachers leading PE lessons. Those choosing a specialists route would, it is presumed, bring to their training a higher level of experience and enthusiasm for primary PE. Specialists would also benefit from more extensive subject based ITE; Caldecott, Warburton and Waring (2006) found that while 20 hours were typically allocated to PE in generalist teacher education, specialist routes provided on average 208 hours of subject based training. This tenfold difference in time allocation would also mean that specialists would not be reliant on CPD to compensate for deficiencies in their training, rather they would access this provision to enhance (what is expected would be) their already proficient skills and subject knowledge.

The arguments for specialist ITE, not least the assumed impact this would have on the quality of PE teaching, were behind a two year pilot programme announced by the Prime Minister in 2014. This programme was designed to bring over two hundred specialist PE teachers to the profession (DCMS, DfE & Number 10, 2014) and acknowledge the need, identified by Harris, Cale and Musson (2011), to find more effective methods of developing teachers' competence and confidence in primary PE. Not only would the training of specialist PE teachers seemingly improve the quality of PE teaching but it would also provide SLs of the future. Ofsted (2013) noted that the majority of PE SLs were non-specialists and that in schools where PE was thought to require improvement the SLs lacked sufficient knowledge

and enthusiasm to drive the subject forward. In contrast, Ofsted (2013) also noted that effective leaders were able to model high quality teaching, aspired to improve the subject and worked effectively to share good practice with colleagues. Thus, the training of specialists, and preparing them for a future role as SLs, would seemingly be of long term benefit to raising the standards of primary PE.

How is Physical Education taught within Primary Schools?

Having examined what is taught in primary PE and who is responsible for teaching it, this section will conclude by considering how the subject is taught and assessed. A relatively extensive amount of literature suggests that PE is being taught ineffectively within primary schools and that primary aged children subsequently suffer from comparatively low levels of skill proficiency (Bailey et al, 2009; Foweather, 2010; Griggs, 2007; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2011, Jess & Dewar, 2004; Ofsted, 2005, 2009, 2013). This section, and the thesis as a whole, will examine these claims and establish an understanding of the approaches that are adopted to plan, teach and assess PE in primary schools.

The most recent Ofsted subject report seemingly refutes concerns over the quality of teaching in primary PE lessons. It states that over two thirds of the primary schools that were inspected as part of the report had good or outstanding teaching of PE (Ofsted, 2013). This was noted as being a considerable improvement on the teaching seen at the time of the previous survey; which had also shown improving trends in primary PE (Ofsted, 2009). While this is seemingly a positive statement of development, the 70% of good or outstanding PE lessons is still well behind the average for all subjects in the primary sector; which stands at 82% (Ofsted, 2014). It would seem that the teaching of primary PE is improving, but is still not at the same level as that observed by Ofsted inspectors in other subjects. The comparatively

poor standard of teaching in PE is often explained by classroom teachers' inadequate preparation to teach the subject. Thus, the rise in the proportion of good or outstanding PE lessons has been attributed directly to the professional development provided by SSPs (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012, Ofsted, 2013), while concerns remain about the usefulness of the limited and declining time allocated to PE within ITE (Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012; House of Commons Education Committee, 2013; Ofsted, 2013).

The inadequate provision of ITE, along with the considerable breadth of the NCPE, means that for the most part classroom teachers are not well equipped to teach the full range of activity areas (Ofsted, 2009). As a consequence, while teachers have been found to value PE and recognise the contribution it makes to the development of children (Morgan, 2008), they are also thought to exhibit generally negative attitudes towards the subject, often lacking the motivation and confidence to engage fully with planning, teaching and assessment (Morgan & Bourke, 2008).

Ofsted (2013) similarly noted that the two main weaknesses in primary teachers' work in PE were subject knowledge and assessment. These inadequacies were thought to lead to poor planning and an insufficient level of challenge for pupils, particularly for those that were more able. The lack of subject knowledge and confidence were described as being "notable barriers to raising the achievement of more able children in a third of the schools visited" (Ofsted, 2013, p.17). In some lessons all pupils performed the same activities and as a consequence those children that already had a good level of basic skills were not challenged in their learning. Concern was also expressed at the extended periods of inactivity in some lessons where pupils were not challenged to improve and develop their health and physical fitness.

Assessment was also highlighted as being a 'key weakness in more than half of the schools visited' with 'only a minority of teachers' showing 'a secure understanding of how to measure pupils' progress accurately in PE' (Ofsted, 2013, p.18). The inability of teachers to use assessment effectively to improve pupils' learning has been noted as an enduring weakness of primary PE (Ofsted, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013). As such, Ofsted (2013) have recommended that learning activities in PE should be planned in relation to what children already know, so that the lesson content builds on prior learning and that pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. This model of personalised provision depends on effective assessment procedures, so that teachers have a clear understanding of the capabilities of their pupils. This remains a significant challenge for those involved in teaching primary PE, as too many were seen to have a system that 'added little to improving pupils' learning and progress' (Ofsted, 2013,.p.19).

While primary teachers tend to lack confidence across the range of activity areas they have been found to favour the teaching of games (Capel, 2007; Ofsted, 2009; Ward & Griggs, 2011). Despite the preference for this activity area the teaching of games is still compromised by the pedagogical approaches that are adopted in many primary schools. A demonstration-replication model is often adopted by teachers, with significant parts of the lessons being devoted to static skill practices that are divorced from the context of the game. While this approach allows for the rehearsal of appropriate skills, the nature of the pedagogy is often less engaging and challenging for pupils and doesn't teach them how to play the game (Casey & Quennerstedt, 2015; Kirk, 2010; Ward & Griggs, 2011; Waring, Warburton & Coy, 2007).

The historical association between PE and sport is thought to be the reason for the dominance of a teaching model that is based around the practice and performance of motor skills (Capel,

2000, 2007; Griggs, 2007, 2010). Skill acquisition is by far the most common activity undertaken in games lessons (Ofsted, 2009) with Waring, Warburton and Coy (2007) noting that this accounted for 45.9% of lesson time. A teaching model based on the acquisition of skills is seemingly embedded within primary PE by the close association that the subject has with sport. The more recent trend of employing sports coaches to teach PE lessons is unlikely to challenge this association, as this arrangement essentially treats sport and PE as being one and the same. In short, the employment of sports coaches has seemingly reinforced the acceptance of this model, with PE lessons coming to resemble the teaching of 'sports techniques' (Kirk, 2010, Ward & Griggs, 2011; Ward, 2013).

The main enduring problems of primary PE, relating to confidence, subject knowledge, assessment, and narrow skill based pedagogical approaches, have in part been improved by the intervention of professional development programmes as part of SSPs. These improvements have not, however, been sufficient for PE to 'catch up' with the teaching standards seen in the primary sector as a whole. It would seem that a reliance on generalist classroom teachers, who have experienced only limited and often wholly inadequate ITE, is an underlying and pervasive weakness that shapes the teaching of primary PE. Many teachers still enter the profession with limited subject and pedagogical knowledge and are left feeling anxious and ill prepared to teach the subject.

Conclusion

This review of literature has aimed to establish what is known about the nature and practice of primary PE in the UK. It has examined four areas in all, with the analysis of the first three sections, *The emergence and development of primary PE, The socio-political context for primary PE* and *The values and status of primary PE,* all aiming to examine the broader

context in which the subject has developed and is taught. The final section, *The teaching, content and organisation of primary PE,* has sought to bring this analysis together and use additional literature to explore the nature and practice of primary PE.

In relation to what is taught in primary PE and how it is organised, it would seem that there are varied views on the amount of time devoted to the subject. The two hour target, although not enforced by the current government, is still an aspiration for the PE profession, but it is unclear as to whether or not this is achieved in schools. One thing appears certain, is that the prioritisation of core subject, means that PE is in a comparatively vulnerable position in relation to its position on the primary timetable. With regard to the organisation of PE lessons, it would seem that the subject is still influenced by its development as a collection of different activity areas. The new curriculum is not organised as strictly into discrete blocks, but this legacy is still evident in schools, with games activities being most prominent. Games are thought to account for over half of the PE timetable, with one of the (typically) two lessons a week often being dedicated to this area alone. The prominence of traditional games is founded on the history of the subject, but is also (mutually) reinforced by an extracurricular programme which offers more of the same and by the Government's clearly stated aim of promoting competitive sport. Indeed the closer association of sporting organisation with primary PE, through recent government policies such as PESSCL, PESSYP and the *PE and Sport Premium*, has only reinforced the dominant position of games.

The responsibility for teaching the subject has traditionally fallen to generalist classroom teachers, but more recently both specialist teachers and particularly sports coaches are seen to be far more prominent. The extent of the inclusion of the latter is unclear, but their use is seemingly on the rise. The exact reasons for the greater involvement of sports coaches is not

certain either, but is likely to be an outcome of a range of policies which have normalised their inclusion in the broader primary workforce and also the paucity of PE ITE and CPD for generalist teachers. These issues are well established and make it more likely for generalists to be willing to hand over PE lessons to adults other than teachers. The consequence of the different staffing models used to teach PE are varied as there are seemingly strengths and weaknesses in all approaches. Generalist are thought to have better knowledge of the children and more secure pedagogical skills, but less confidence and subject knowledge in relation to PE. Sports coaches in contrast have specific subject knowledge, but this tends to be limited to particular (typically games based) areas of the curriculum. They lack broader understanding of the curriculum and don't have the same knowledge of the children. Finally, specialist teachers, although an expensive option, would seem to combine the strengths of generalists and sports coaches, with wider pedagogical skills and secure PE specific subject knowledge.

The last section considered how PE lessons were taught in primary schools. In the first instance, it would appear that PE is not taught well – by comparison with the standards established in other subjects. This was again seen to be an outcome of the quality and availability of ITE and CPD, with particular weaknesses noted in relation to assessment along with limitations in other aspects of pedagogy. Primary teachers were also shown to have a preference for games teaching, but learning was still thought to be compromised by the adoption of didactic skill based teaching models. In this regard, the greater use of sports coaches in primary PE lessons was thought to risk reinforcing a narrow pedagogical approach that prioritises the teaching of sports techniques.

In light of what has been established about the nature and practice of primary PE, the thesis will attempt to confirm, and add, to what is already known about the subject. As such, the thesis will test the propositions put forward in the following two hypotheses:

1. That the staffing models and teaching approaches used to teach PE in primary schools, along with the content of lessons, will be varied.
2. That the variable nature and practice of the subject will be best explained by the figurations which primary PE teachers belong to.

The figurational approach, which will be adopted to explain and understand the data that relates to primary PE, will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Figurational sociology

Introduction

The theoretical framework for this study is drawn from the work of Norbert Elias and figurational sociology. This chapter aims, in the first instance, to explain some of the distinctive, and more generally sociological, concepts that make up the figurational perspective. It also aims to show the relevance of these key concepts and how the work of figurational sociologists can be applied in the sociological analysis of primary PE. In this regard the chapter introduces a number of interrelated sociological concepts that together inform the figurational perspective adopted in the study. These key concepts include: networks of interdependent relationships (or figurations); habitus; unintended outcomes; power; and involvement and detachment. The following sections will say more about each of these and how they can be applied in the sociological analysis of primary PE.

Networks of interdependent relationships

The central concept of figurational sociology is the figurations themselves, which were described by Elias (1978, p.261) as 'a structure of mutually orientated and dependent people'. Elias believed that human beings are inherently social and that emphasis should be placed on understanding people in the plural. All people are inescapably bound up in social relationships as they depend on others for their needs – for food, safety, self-esteem and so on – but the relationship is interdependent in that the same people are also relied upon to provide for others. As such, Elias developed a critical attitude towards the conception of human beings as single autonomous individuals 'who ultimately exists quite independently of the great world outside' (Elias, 1978, p.261). He adopted an alternative view of human beings in

the plural rather than the singular, where social behaviour is understood in the context of the relationships that people have with others.

The networks of social relationships that form in society are understood by figurational sociologists as being complex and fluid, in that the number of individuals and groups involved will vary and change over time; as will the nature and strength of the bonds that bind them together (Van Krieken, 1998). A PE SL, for example, will have mutually dependent relationships with other teachers in their school figuration; as they share a common purpose around the care and education of the children. The level of interdependency in these relationships would change, however, in different circumstances. If one teacher decided, for example, to contribute to extracurricular sport by running a school team, it would change their relationship with the PE SL. There would be greater interdependence in their relationship as the PE SL would depend on the teacher for their contribution to the promotion of sport and sports participation, while the teacher may rely of the expertise of the SL to run the team. Thus in order to understand social behaviour it is important to recognise that networks of interdependent relationships are multidimensional, dynamic and fluid (Elias, 1978). This is especially important in circumstances where the chains of interdependent relationships lengthen and the complexity of networks increases. In this study for example, SLs of PE operate within the immediate network of their own primary school, but are also interdependent with sports coaches, coaching companies, secondary PE teachers, policy makers and governing bodies of sport; to name but a few.

The study of figurations also enables social researchers to emphasize the processual nature of society and in so doing avoid the dualism of structure and agency. Elias pointed towards what he saw as a problematic conception of the relationship between society and the individual

(Van Krieken, 1998). The tendency within conventional sociology to understand human action as being the outcome of either structure or agency (that is, either determined by the influence of social structures or by the free will of the individual) was thought to be misleading as it reduced long term social processes to two distinct and static categories (Murphy, Sheard & Waddington, 2000). This 'false dichotomy' was seen to be unhelpful, as the individual and society are in reality inextricably bound in dynamic and multi-layered networks (Elias, 1978). In short, the study of human behaviour through the concept of figurations allows social scientists to move beyond tautological arguments that needlessly question whether human behaviour is the result of society or the will of the individual, as both standpoints are necessarily true. The figurational approach to understanding human behaviour will be considered in the next section, by examining the interactions that take place between individuals and groups, and the impact that they have on habitus.

Habitus

Elias first used the concept of habitus in *The Civilizing Process* to help explain the behaviour of individuals and groups within figurations. For Elias, habitus refers to a person's 'second nature' that acts as 'an automatic, blindly functioning apparatus of self-control' (Elias, Mennell & Goudsbloom, 1998, p.52). This conception is different to the understanding of habitus that has arguably come to greater prominence, despite emerging later, through the work of Bourdieu. While there are clear similarities between the two, Bourdieu's use of the term characteristically includes greater reference to bodily habitus, while Elias emphasises a conception that is centred on personality structure and habitual behaviour (Van Kreiken, 1998). For Elias, habitus related to an 'automatic self-restraint, a habit that, within certain limits, also functions when a person is alone' (Elias 1994, p.137).

Habitus is socially constructed and is acquired through everyday experiences of our relationships with others (Van Krieken, 1998). The development of a person's habitus occurs within figurations and is linked with the process of socialization; as individuals learn the norms, values and behaviours that are associated with their social group. Elias believed that this process occurs over a lifetime and is influenced by our changing social relationships within increasingly complex figurations; but also maintained that the formative years are the most important in establishing, what becomes, a deep-rooted personality structure (Green 2003). The impact of their early experiences as pupils may, for example, be useful in understanding primary teachers' ingrained preference for one subject over another, and also help explain the comparatively limited influence of relatively short interventions such as ITE and CPD.

The development of a person's habitus was thought by Elias to occur over a lifetime, but to also be founded on the longer term process of the development of human relationships within society. Elias believed that the 'understanding that people attribute to different experiences and phenomena, is shaped by the standard way that these forms are thought about within society' (Mennell, 1998, p.161). In this regard, we are influenced by previous generations, as the norms and values that we internalise have been socially constructed and passed on by earlier human relationships (Murphy, Sheard &Waddington, 2000). Thus, the personality structure of human beings is rooted in the relationships that they form within figurations, but is also based on a longer term process of social development and change. Within primary education, for example, the values attributed by teachers to a generalist teaching model (whereby one teacher develops supposedly educationally valuable relationships with the pupils in their class by leading all subjects) will have been created and passed on by previous generations of teachers. In this regard, the behaviour of teachers (working as generalists) is an

expression of their habitus which has been influenced by their involvement in figurations (such as their own experience of primary schools as pupils) and by the standard way in which the norms and values associated with education have been passed on by previous generations.

Understanding human actions in terms of the interactions of individuals and groups over time, arguably allows for more adequate analysis of social behaviour. But, one criticism of Elias' work is that it is purely historical and cannot predict trends for the future (Bauman, 1990). This is acknowledged by figurational sociologists who are cautious in predicting the impact of human action as they recognise that the application of knowledge in everyday life is somewhat difficult as it is bound to produce unintended consequences (Coakley, 2003). Elias showed human interaction within figurations to possess both intended and unintended consequences. He believed that although societies are composed of human beings who engage in intentional action, the outcome of the combination of human actions is most often unplanned and unintended. It is this outcome of social processes that is considered next.

Unintended outcomes

Elias showed human interaction within figurations as having both intended consequences and also unplanned outcomes that were not anticipated or controlled (Elias, 1978). He believed that societies are composed of individuals and groups who are bonded together in unplanned networks of interdependence and although human beings engage in intentional actions within these figurations, the outcome is most often unplanned. As such, Elias emphasised an understanding of human action as a 'blind' social process that resulted in intended and unintended consequences, as he wanted to counter any simplistic interpretation of the relationship between human action and its outcomes (Van Krieken, 1998).

In the context of this study, SLs work in complex figurations with other individuals and organisations and, as such, the sequence of actions is not straightforward and can become difficult to predict. Pressures are exerted in different ways and directions, and work together to constrain or enable the behaviour of different individuals or groups. Elias (1978) developed the analogy of a 'game model' to explain this dynamic complexity, where individual players, as part of a team, are constantly responding to the actions of others who are also trying to exert their influence on the game. By conceptualizing the influence of power in this way, it was hoped to provide a clearer picture of the relationships that exist between interdependent people, and in this study an insight into how SLs interact with others from within and beyond their school community. This may be particularly important, as one trend identified by Smith (2013) within primary PE is for SL to be working with a wider range of individuals (such as SSCos, sports coaches and secondary PE teachers), and organisations (such as coaching companies, policy makers and governing bodies of sport). The restructuring of human relations in this way is thought by Elias to lead to greater unpredictability within the 'game'. He maintained that where chains of interdependency are lengthened within larger and more complex figurations, the power differentials between individuals and groups are reduced (Green, 2000). Where power becomes more equal in larger groups of people, the more likely it is for the outcomes to vary and for individuals to be less able to control the direction in which the 'game' moves. 'The very complexity and dynamic character of the interweaving of the actions of large numbers of people continuously give rise to outcomes that no one has chosen and no one has designed' (Murphy, Sheard &Waddington, 2000, p.92).

The outcome of human action in figurations is not straightforward, as the varying power relationships, which exists between interdependent individuals and groups, within complex

networks, gives rise to unintended and unpredicted outcomes. Power, as a particularly important characteristic of social relationships, will be considered next.

Power

Power was thought by Elias (1978) to be a structural characteristic of interdependencies. He believed that within figurations some individuals and groups inevitably have greater proportions of the resources that are needed by others, and that this leads to the power relationships that exist between individuals and groups. The power that comes from the control of resources is not absolute, however, as when two or more people are bonded together the relationship that exists between them is fostered by their mutual dependency on the other(s) to provide a resource. As such, while Elias believed that power is an inevitable characteristic of human relationships, he also maintained that it is never absolute; there is always reliance on others. 'Power is always a question of relative balances, never of absolute possession or absolute deprivation, for no one is ever absolutely powerful or absolutely powerless' (Murphy, Sheard &Waddington, 2000, p.93). The relative balance of power is seen in schools, for example, where the hierarchical nature of the organisation provides head teachers with greater control over the allocation of resources and thus the power to make decisions. In comparison, main-scale teachers have relatively little power in the school figuration, but they are not powerless as they control their own teaching – a resource that the head teacher depends on for the school to function successfully.

Power was also seen to be a dynamic aspect of relationships (Elias, 1978). The power ratio between a head teacher and a main-scale teacher might change, for example, if the head becomes more dependent on that teacher than hitherto. If the teacher is appointed as a subject leader or if they develop expertise in an area that the head believes the school needs in order

to succeed, then the power relationship between them would be expected to change. In this regard Elias used the term ‘power balance’ to convey his conception of power as being a fluid entity rather than something that is set in a permanent state. The balance of power between individuals or groups may change direction in given circumstances, for as Murphy, Sheard and Waddington (2000, p.93) noted, ‘power tends to shift and change over time in connection with constantly emerging economic, political, and emotional dimensions of social life’.

Finally, as the balance of power is not static but is seen as a fluid and changing characteristic of every interdependent network (Van Krieken, 1998), figurational sociologists believe that human societies can only be understood as consisting of long-term processes of development and change. Elias (1978) spoke in this regard of the ‘retreat of sociologists into the present’ while his approach is grounded in a longer term historical basis. His argument was that sociologists cannot logically avoid concerning themselves with long term social processes in order to understand present day human action, as the norms and values that shape behaviour have been socially constructed by previous generations. In this regard, this study will consider the historical development of primary PE to provide a context for, and better understanding of, the contemporary nature of the subject.

Despite the emphasis given by Elias (1978) to power as a structural characteristic of interdependencies, the figurational approach has been criticised for giving too little attention to the problems that affect day-to-day lives. Figurationalists, it is claimed, understate the immediate personal consequences of oppressive power relations, particularly in relation to gender issues (Coakley, 2003). This neglect, claims Hargreaves (1992, cited in Murphy, Sheard & Waddington, 2000), stems from the tendency of the figurational approach to study in a relatively detached manner and in so doing uncritically accept gender inequalities.

Figurational sociologists have, however, written on aspects of gender. Dunning (1992, p255) has for example accepted that 'we have in the past been too silent on the question of gender'. While Hargreaves first criticism of neglect may be substantiated her second – that the emphasis on detachment leads figurational sociologist to accept prevailing male-dominated ideologies – has been shown to be less valid. Murphy, Sheard and Waddington (2000) argue that there is nothing in the methodology which militates against the study of gender. The emphasis on relatively detached study is not to be either critical or accepting, but to achieve figurational sociologists' primary goal of developing a more adequate understanding of social behaviour.

To conclude this chapter, the final section will consider how an understanding of the complexity of human relationships led Elias to the conceptualization of involvement and detachment in social research.

Involvement and detachment

Elias (1987) rejected the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' as the basis of conventional ontological thinking. For Elias, the use of such opposing concepts reduced knowledge to a static position; to a false dichotomy where the means of developing understanding is limited, to the epistemological traditions of either positivism or interpretivism, but never a combination of both. Elias viewed the acceptance of such static positions as a barrier to understanding and proposed instead a more fluid model of 'involvement and detachment'. The use of such terminology was thought to be a more accurate representation of social research (Perry, Thurston & Green, 2005) and one which permitted social scientists to move beyond conventional 'either or' thinking in relation to the acquisition of knowledge.

Elias (1970) maintained that it was necessary to retain a detachment or ‘separation from oneself’ in conducing social research. Elias noted that as society is formed by ‘oneself and other people together’, sociologists inevitably study other interdependent human beings and are part of their scientific study. Thus, the interdependent nature of figurations means that social scientists cannot avoid a measure of involvement in their own research and theorizing. This proximity can lead to insights, that may otherwise have been overlooked, but it can also be a barrier to research, as social researchers can be more concerned with sustaining and justifying their own ideological beliefs than in developing a more adequate understanding of social life (Murphy, Sheard &Waddington, 2000). Thus, Elias (1970) argued that, social scientist should go beyond an emotionally conceived view of the human world and take a ‘detour via detachment’ to increase understanding during the research process. That is, social scientists should aim to distance themselves (as much as it is possible to do so) from their own values, while also recognising that involvement is inevitable in the research of social phenomena.

Elias’s model of involvement and detachment was interpreted by Rojek (1992, p.17 cited in Bloyce, 2004) as 'a methodology of self-consciously distancing oneself from the object of study'. This interpretation is rejected by Bloyce (2004) who argues that figurationalists actually strive for a more balanced position that combines involvement and detachment. Elias maintained that social scientists are all influenced by their involvement in the subject area of their research, but that this involvement can lead to a level of understanding that would otherwise be compromised by simply ‘distancing oneself from the object of study’. Taking a ‘detour via detachment’, it is argued, enables a researcher to recognise and reduce emotional influences; and in so doing achieve a balance between involvement and detachment that combines the benefits of both in developing a more adequate understanding of the social

world. By taking a ‘detour via detachment’, the researcher is sufficiently involved to understand the context and gain insights into the field of study, while also remaining relatively detached so that they can identify and minimise (but not entirely avoid) emotional influences.

Rojek (1986) also criticised Elias for not explaining how the balance between involvement and detachment should be achieved. This was seen to be less important by Bloyce (2004) as raising awareness of the outcome of inevitable involvement was sufficient for researchers to adopt more detached approaches and develop more adequate understanding. In the context of this study for example, when describing and explaining the nature of primary PE, I aim to reflect upon and recognise my own ideological leanings and strike an appropriate balance between involvement and detachment. I also aim to consider the PE SLs own involvement and detachment when analysing the findings. In this regard the concept of involvement and detachment is relevant to the methodology and methods, as well as to the study itself.

Conclusion

The most common general criticism of Elias’s figurational work is that it does not represent a distinct perspective within sociology (Murphy, Sheard & Waddington, 2000). Figurational sociologists do acknowledge that Elias has drawn various threads of sociological thought together, but perceive this to be a strength rather than a weakness. What makes the approach powerful according to Van Krieken (2004) is that its key sociological concepts represent the best of what is spread across a variety of sociological perspectives.

The underlying idea in Elias’s work is that we only exist in and through our relationships with others and that in order to understand social behaviour it is necessary for its study to be

within the context of these figurations. The outcome of human action is, he maintained, often unplanned and unintended as it occurs within complex networks where power relationships shift and develop over time (Elias, 1978). Examining human actions in relation to key sociological concepts such as networks of interdependent relationships (or figurations); habitus; unintended outcomes; power; and involvement and detachment is thought to allow for a more adequate understanding of social behaviour. As such, by analysing primary PE in relation to the interrelated sociological concepts that together inform the figurational perspective, it is hoped to be possible to develop a more adequate understanding of the nature and practice of the subject.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

The aims of this chapter are twofold: first, to explain and justify the research design and methods that have been adopted in the thesis; second, to describe and explain how the research was carried out. In doing so this chapter will begin with a more conventional discussion of the nature and meaning of reality and the ways in which knowledge of such phenomena should be acquired. It will then explain how and why a case study of 36 primary schools was used as the setting for semi-structured interviews with 36 PE SLs. Finally, it will also examine the theoretical framework of grounded theory that has informed the analysis of data gathered about the nature and practice of primary PE.

Research strategy

The approaches adopted in research by sociologists often reflect their underlying beliefs about the nature and meaning of reality and the ways in which knowledge of such phenomena should be acquired. As such, it is conventional to include a discussion of ontology and epistemology, to provide a foundation for the assumptions inherent in the study and also to help determine the most appropriate method of answering the research questions.

Ontology is an area of philosophy that is concerned with definitions of what exists and is real in the world; in other words, the nature and meaning of reality. The central issue is whether social reality is constructed from the subjective observations and interpretations of human beings or is an objective state which is consistently 'real' and not subject to varying perceptions (Bryman, 2012). The emerging discipline of sociology was influenced by the pre-eminent position of science and developed with an objective ontological view. This in turn led to the adoption of a positivist epistemological approach, where epistemology is a

theoretical viewpoint of what counts as knowledge as well as how knowledge is gained (Bryman, 2008). In this regard, early social scientists tended to adopt a positivist epistemological position as it aligned with the emergence of an objective ontological view. They typically aimed to explain social phenomena through the quantitative measurement of observable behaviour and applied the methods of the natural sciences in developing understanding of the social world (Roberts, 2009, 2012).

The second half of the twentieth century saw the orthodox view of sociology being challenged, with a more subjective ontological position now in the ascendancy. The subjective ontological view brought a different understanding of how knowledge could be gathered. The emerging epistemological approach was now founded on interpretivism, which in contrast to positivism, rejected the application of a natural science model to the study of social phenomena. The subject matter of the social sciences was now seen as being fundamentally different to the inanimate objects studied by natural sciences; as human beings have the capacity to reflect on their behaviour and act accordingly. As such, it was argued that the study of the social world required different approaches, which were better suited to examining the meaning of social action and phenomena (Bryman, 2012, Roberts, 2009, 2012).

As noted previously Elias (1978) was highly critical of using opposing concepts; of allowing a false dichotomy that reduced knowledge to a static position. Acceptance of such absolute positions was seen as a barrier to understanding as it limited researchers to the traditions of either the subjective or objective ontological position; when a combination of both might more adequately develop reality-congruent understanding.

Elais (1978) was concerned with escaping what he considered the misleading conventions that govern the understanding of knowledge. Research approaches cannot be divided in a simple and straightforward manner as quantitative research for example inevitably involves some qualitative aspects when the researcher makes judgements and interprets findings. As such, the research approaches adopted in this study should not be thought of in absolute terms as being either qualitative or quantitative, rather they should be understood more fluidly as being on a continuum between the two.

Elias (1978) finally also noted that the research process is characterised by the interdependence between theory and data and that the advancement of knowledge depends on the constant interplay between these two aspects. Elias (1987) maintained that sociologists should relate their data to theory and theory to data in the aim of developing a more reality-congruent understanding of the social phenomena under investigation. He noted that 'questions emerge and are solved as a result of uninterrupted two way traffic between two layers of knowledge; that of general ideas, theories or models and that of observations and perceptions of specific events' (Elias, 1987, p.20). Thus, an entirely inductive or deductive approach places limits of the researcher which constrains their pursuit of more reality-congruent understanding.

In short Elias was critical of more traditional conventions that govern the research process. For figurationalists the methods adopted can be a blend of both research traditions, with their precise nature being determined by the research questions and type of data that is to be gathered. It would be inappropriate to restrict research to one particular tradition, as social scientists must choose their methods as being the most suitable means of answering their research questions (Bloyce, 2004).

The chapter will now explain and justify the research design that was used to answer the research questions addressed in this thesis.

Research design

In order to answer the research questions the research design was centred on a case study of 36 primary schools within a SSP in the north-west of England. Semi-structured interviews with 36 SLs for PE were used to gather data about primary PE and meet the aims of the study; namely to describe and explain the nature and practice of primary PE.

Case studies are thought to be appropriate in situations where complex data is expected from a comparatively low population (Gratton & Jones, 2004). They are centred on an in-depth analysis of one particular case and are thought to provide useful insights into the contexts and relationships involved (Bryman, 2012). While case studies allow for detailed investigation, a common criticism is that any insight is limited to the particular setting of the study and that results cannot be generalised to the broader population. Nonetheless case studies are still credible as they examine typical settings in detail and provide findings that clarify more general issues or social patterns (Roberts, 2009; Somekh & Lewin, 2011). As such, a single case study is not considered to be representative, such that generalisations can be made to explain other settings. It is, however, chosen to be a typical case which when analysed can clarify the nature of the setting and explain the social processes that are involved (Bryman, 2012).

In this study the case was related to a SSP; a structure of schools that were created by the *PESSCL* (DfES/DCMS, 2003) strategy to facilitate its overall aim. Investment in partnerships

ended in 2011 as Michael Gove (the former Secretary of State for Education) rejected the model based on the costs involved and on the perceived failings of the system. Nonetheless, many primary schools continued to work in their clusters, and the partnership does provide a convenient case study for analysing the nature of primary PE. In this instance the SSP consisted of 51 primary schools that had been organised around seven secondary schools and one Specialist Sports College. This was consistent with the typical size of a partnership which is usually made up of a Specialist Sports College, eight secondary schools and around fifty feeder primary and special schools (DfES/DCMS, 2003). The 36 schools, from within the partnership, that were chosen to be part of the case study were selected based on known characteristics, so that as they were added to the case they continued to reflected the diverse nature of the partnership. The schools were added until a point of saturation had been achieved; that is, where the same data and themes were emerging and no additional insights were being provided into the nature and practice of primary PE (Bryman, 2012).

While the case included 36 primary schools, it was centred more specifically on the PE SLs from within these schools. Case studies are valuable as a means of interrogating a social phenomenon such as primary PE, and creating a detailed description from the perspective of the participants. As such, it was important for those included in the case to be directly involved in leading primary PE and to be relevant to the overall aims of the study.

Finally, while case studies produce practical knowledge, from the standpoint of participants about the realities of their situation, they also fit well with the figurational approach. In particular, they allow for the detailed analysis of relationships within interdependent networks (Bryman, 2012), of social processes over time (Denscombe, 2010) and of the unintended outcomes associated with human actions and the implementation of policy

(Somekh & Lewin, 2011). In short the case is subjected to a level of scrutiny that allows the researcher to uncover a clear and detailed understanding of the social processes involved (Bryman, 2012). As such, a case study approach was adopted to examine the nature and practice of primary PE from the perspectives of those key individuals who were directly involved in leading the subject.

Research methods

Interviews are thought to be particularly well suited to the collection of data in a case study (Denscombe, 2010). This research technique is a well-established means of primary data collection within qualitative research. The type used may vary from structured interviews, which use predetermined questions as part of formal process, to unstructured interviews, which are less constrained and allow the respondent the freedom to answer questions in a way that they want to (Bryman, 2012). Part way between these two lies semi-structured interviews, a technique which adopts practices used in both structured and unstructured approaches (Bryman, 2012; May, 2001). In this technique the interviewer will have some established standardised questions, to enable comparison between answers, but at the same time there will also be the freedom to pursue and explore themes through additional questions as they emerge.

The use of semi-structured interviews is thought to be particularly well suited to the figurational approach because of the depth of data that they can provide (Bloyce, 2004). Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher a deeper level of insight into respondents' thoughts and experiences as they not only enable the interviewer to capture the views of the respondent, but also to understand the context, relationships and constraints that influence their everyday life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The standardised nature of most of the

questions in a semi-structured interview also allows for relatively easy comparison between the data gathered from different respondents at different sites (Bryman, 2012). But while the interviewer will have a standardised interview schedule there is also some latitude to ask follow-up questions thereby allowing the interviewee to elaborate and explain their thoughts and experiences in greater depth. By adopting this technique, the researcher had the flexibility to enter into a dialogue with the SLs, to clarify more complex issues and elicit data that may otherwise have remained uncovered (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

While probing for additional answers may have provided a richer level of information, this aspect of semi-structured interviews does create a problem of comparing non-standard responses. As such, analysis of data is more complex when using semi-structured interviews than when respondents are restricted to a more formal and structured approach (Bryman, 2012). Interviews are also more demanding in that they require additional time and resources for travel, the interview itself and the transcription of data. Nonetheless, figurationalists would always argue that any difficulties or costs incurred are outweighed by the wealth of data and insights provided by semi-structured interviews. The concern is to develop a more adequate understanding rather than to be convenient.

Bryman (2012) also notes the possibility of bias within semi-structured interviews, in that the presence of the interviewer may unconsciously influence the response given. In particular, the answers provided may be influenced by the interviewees' perception of the social desirability of those responses. In this way the presence of the interviewer may unintentionally encourage answers which are perceived to be more 'favourable' rather than ones which accurately reflected the truth (May, 2001). The possibility of bias is thought by Bryman (2012) to be a particular issue where there is too much familiarity between the interviewer and interviewee.

In this study, while it was thought useful to establish a rapport to encourage greater dialogue during the interview, the SLs themselves were not personally known to the interviewer meaning that there was very little familiarity and that interviews were conducted in a more detached manner.

Overall, the use of semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to generate a depth of data, as those involved in leading PE were able to speak widely on the topic and provide an understanding of the relationships and context that they worked within. This allowed the researcher to develop understanding from the perspective of primary PE SLs (Bryman, 2012), and was a particularly useful means of investigating the research questions outlined in the study.

Sampling

As the study design was centred on the use of semi-structured interviews to gather data for a case study of primary schools, the sampling process took place across two levels; the sampling of the primary schools and then the primary school SLs themselves. Given the need to select individuals who were involved in primary PE and to do so in a way that allowed for insights into the social processes that impact on their particular context, a purposive sampling approach was adopted. In purposive sampling the settings and participants are included or excluded based on their relevance to the purposes of the study (Roberts, 2009). Participants are selected in a deliberate manner that allows for the research questions to be answered and the overall aims of the study to be achieved. As such, the selection of settings and participants was based on known characteristics so that a diverse sample was chosen (Denscombe, 2010).

Schools

In the first level of sampling, the selection of schools was based on a purposive sample of known characteristics in order to ensure that a diverse range was chosen. All of the research for this study was conducted at 36 primary state schools that are located within a SSP of 51 primary schools in the north-west of England. The settings were selected to be typical of the partnership as a whole and were added to a point of saturation; where no new or relevant information was emerging about the nature and practice of primary PE (Bryman, 2012). As such, the schools contrasted, among other things, in relation to the social class of their catchment area, the number of children on roll and their current Ofsted grade. The average number of children on roll within the sample was 190, with the largest school having 475 pupils and the smallest 31. Eight of the schools had been graded as 'outstanding' by Ofsted, while two were thought to 'require improvement'. The remaining 26 schools were judged to be 'good'. The chosen schools also contrasted in relation to social class, based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and the Index of Multiple Deprivation Score (IMDS).

The level of pupil and school deprivation is commonly measured through an indirect analysis of free school meal (FSM) data, as these meals are available to children from poorer families. Thus, the use of this data has the advantages of being directly linked to the children at the school, of being updated annually and of being readily available and understood. However, while eligibility for FSM is a widely used proxy measure of deprivation, there are some concerns around its reliability. Most notably this measure is likely to under-report deprivation as some families who are entitled to the service chose not to apply and are therefore not included in the data (Northern Ireland Assembly, 2010). Families whose income is just above

the threshold will similarly not be included, despite being likely to experience comparable levels of deprivation.

The main alternative means of measuring deprivation is through the use of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation Score (IMDS). These indices potentially provide a broader range of information as they consider a wider spectrum of factors such as income, employment, living conditions and so on. In contrast to data around free school meals, however, the indices are not updated annually and there are considerable issues in relation to the boundaries that they cover. The information is generated from very small, ward-sized areas called Lower Super Output Areas; these don't necessarily correlate closely with school catchment areas. As such, the use of indices is problematic as a school intake will include pupils from different socio-economic circumstances which exist beyond the immediate Lower Super Output Area.

There are problems with the use of both FSM data and the IMDS, but taken together they provide an accurate picture of the socio-economic circumstances of families whose children attend a particular school. In this study, one primary school had 41.4% of pupils eligible for FSM – compared with a national average of 15.9 % – and an IMDS of 62.75. This placed the school among 10% of the most deprived in the country. In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, was a school with only 2.4% of children eligible for FSMs and an IMDS of 3.77.

The purposive sampling of schools, so that a diverse range was chosen, was considered important as social class has been identified as a significant determinant of participation in, and attitudes towards, physical activity (Allender, Cowburn & Foster, 2006; Green, 2004; Green, Smith & Roberts, 2005). Selecting schools in this way enabled the study to address one of the key characteristics that is highlighted by a figurational perspective; that the

different models adopted by teachers and the perceptions that they hold will be influenced by the figurations that they are part of.

Teachers

The second level of sampling involved the teachers within the primary schools. Purposive sampling was again used to select potential participants, with the inclusion criteria being based on whether or not they were responsible for leading PE; that is, PE SLs.

The expectation for primary teachers to assume a subject leadership role, after completing their first year of teaching (often referred to as the Newly Qualified Teacher or NQT year), has been in place since the introduction of the national curriculum and is seen as a standard part of primary teachers' duties. Teachers who have assumed this role have been referred to as 'curriculum leaders' or 'subject coordinators', but more recently the Department for Education has used the term 'Subject Leaders' to define and acknowledge the importance of the role. By conducting semi-structured interviews with 36 SLs, the study was well placed to answer the research questions and meet the overarching aims of describing and explaining the nature and practice of primary PE. Potential participants were sampled based on their involvement in leading the PE curriculum and the insights that they were subsequently able to provide to the areas being addressed by the study.

The accurate sampling of participants based on their relevance helped to ensure the quality and usefulness of the data. The sample size is similarly important as it was considered that it must be sufficient to achieve saturation, but not so large as to make the study unmanageable. Saturation is a term used to describe a stage in the research process where sufficient data has been gathered and additional collection is no longer useful as the same information is

emerging and is not contributing to further understanding. What constitutes sufficient data is contested throughout qualitative research and, in reality, it is impossible to predict accurately the sample size needed to achieve saturation. A review of qualitative research methods conducted by Bryman (2012), however, found that different authors came to varying conclusions around sufficiency of data, with suggested sample sizes ranging from only one or two interviewees up to a minimum of 60. Further work by Mason (cited in Bryman, 2012) found a mean sample size of 31, in an extensive review of interview based doctoral research theses.

In this study saturation was achieved with the total sample size of 36 participants, as the same concepts were emerging time and again and were not contributing to further understanding of the nature and practice of primary PE. As such, 36 primary schools in the north-west of England were visited; with a semi-structured interview being conducted in a quiet and secluded office space with the SL for PE at each school. Of the thirty six SLs interviewed, nine were male. As such, men accounted for exactly 25% of the SLs who were included in the study, while nationally only 12% of the primary workforce is male (Mistry & Sood, 2013). 33 of the SLs were full time and three part time, and 22 (61%) had trained as PE specialists. Finally, the average SL was 38 years old and had 13 years of teaching experience.

Administration of questionnaires

In conducting the research for the study, two main problems were anticipated; namely being refused access to the teachers and schools, and having the process of recruitment, and the interviews themselves, be influenced by personal relationships.

Having formerly worked as a Head of PE within a secondary school and now being involved in teacher training, it was thought possible that some of the research participants would know of the researcher. This may have influenced their decision to participate in the study and may also have impacted upon the quality of interview data. The researcher's work with schools has, however, been within the secondary age phase and, as such, any relationships with primary staff were considered unlikely. To ensure transparency, however, participants were recruited by letter sent to the head teacher of the sampled primary school (see Appendix 1). This asked for their permission for the PE SL to be invited to take part. It was made clear that the head's agreement for the SLs to be approached did not place them under any obligation and that individual staff were free to make their own decision over their own participation.

Ten of the 51 primary schools in the SSP were initially invited to be included in the study. A letter was sent to the head teacher, with a participant information sheet (Appendix 2) and a further letter for the PE SL (Appendix 3). A self-addressed envelope was also included for the return of the consent form, but in the event not a single head teacher replied. After a period of two weeks another ten schools were approached in the same way by letter and the first group were contacted again, but this time via email, with the invitation letters, participant information sheet and consent form included as attachments. After a further week, the first group were emailed for a final time. All subsequent groups of ten schools were approached in the same methodical manner – initial letter, two weeks gap, email, one week gap, final email. If no response was received after the third contact, then it was assumed that the head teacher or PE SL did not want to be involved.

After the initial letter to head teachers, and where needed further follow-up emails, 36 of the 51 primary schools in the SSP were recruited to the study. Schools were invited to be

involved in a systematic way, so that where head teachers were either not replying to correspondence or were unwilling to take part, another school with similar characteristics was approached in the next group of 10. The overall sample was selected on the same inclusion and exclusion criteria; based on known characteristics so that a diverse sample was chosen which was relevant to the research questions and theories being developed.

Adopting this systematic approach to recruitment was thought to limit any possibility of persuasion or coercion, as communication was fully documented and free from direct influence. Participants were also assured of the confidential nature of the interview and that the research was being conducted to gain a better understanding of the reality of their situation, rather than being focused on compliance with any perception of professional standards.

Adopting such staged approach to recruitment was thought to minimise any possibility of coercion, but would also, it was thought, contribute to a further problem of not getting access to schools and staff in the first place. Teachers and adults working in primary schools are invariably very busy and issues around time demands were expected to be a possible impediment in the recruitment of participants and in the quality of the interview data. As such, it was made clear to participants that interviews would be limited to 60 minutes, that they could withdraw from the research at any time (without explanation or fear of reprisal) and that they would also be given the opportunity of accessing, and being debriefed on, the outcomes of the final research. In the event, while the average duration of the interviews was 56 minutes, some did go beyond the hour, but only because the PE SL specifically asked to do so.

Finally, ethical approval for the study was gained from the University of Chester Faculty of Applied Sciences Research Ethics Committee (FREC reference: 674/12/LJ/SES) on 21st May 2012 (Appendix 4).

Pilot study and interview schedule

In order to test the adequacy of the interview schedule a pilot study was completed before starting the formal process of gathering data in schools. To this end two teachers of primary PE (with one being a SL) were interviewed separately, with each interview lasting around 80 minutes. These interviewees were known to the researcher and could not be included in the main study, but their professional involvement in primary PE meant that their participation was invaluable in refining the interview schedule.

The pilot study resulted in a number of changes being made to the interview schedule. These included: i) the rephrasing of some questions to ensure clarity; ii) the reordering of the interview schedule to provide a more coherent structure; and iii) a reduction in the number of questions asked, as the initial interviews were thought to be unreasonably long and likely to dissuade leaders of PE from agreeing to take part.

The following themes formed the basis of the interviews: What is taught in relation to Primary PE and how is it organised? Who is responsible for teaching and leading primary PE? How is the subject taught within primary schools? What context is primary PE taught in? What are the SLs' perceptions of primary PE? An example of a full interview transcript is included in Appendix 5.

Data analysis

The final stage of the research, the process of analysing the interview data gathered from SLs, was informed by some of the techniques that have been developed through grounded theory. Grounded theory is a method developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss that is commonly used in qualitative research to construct theory from the systematic collection and analysis of data. It was originally described in their text *The Discovery of Grounded theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and has since become a popular approach as its careful execution is considered to result in a reliable theory; as it is always grounded in and substantiated by the data.

In the mid-twentieth century positivist, deductive approaches dominated social research; meaning that while existing theories were tested and refined, relatively little 'new' theory was being created (Charmaz, 2006). It was in this context that Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory, as a systematic approach to constructing theory from mainly qualitative data. This approach gradually became popular amongst social researchers, but was interpreted in many different ways and led to the observation that there are as many versions of grounded theory as there are grounded theorists (Dey, 1999). The varied interpretations of grounded theory prompted Glaser and Strauss to clarify their approach in the 1990s, but in doing so they recognised that they had developed different philosophical views on the processes involved.

Glaser (1992) retained an objective – positivist stance and maintained that theory developed directly from the data. He believed that the data existed independently as a single reality and that the researcher could and should distance themselves from the perspectives of the participants and themselves. As such, Glaser maintained that the literature review could

contaminate the research process and that it should be delayed until after the data had been collected and analysed. Theory, he believed, should emerge directly from the data and not be influenced by previous findings (Glaser, 1992). In contrast to Glaser, Strauss moved towards a more interpretivist position and argued that while it is possible for an objective theory to emerge from the collection and analysis of data, the theory that is generated also reflects the particular view of the researcher. As such, Strauss accepted the early completion of a literature review while also advocating that the collection and analysis of data should be free from bias (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In addition to the approaches developed by Glaser and Strauss, many researchers also follow the 'constructivist' grounded theory methods as outlined by Kathy Charmaz (2006). Indeed, Charmaz moved further away from Glaser's philosophical position and adopted a constructivist-interpretivist stance. She viewed theory as being the product of the particular researcher's interpretations and the collection and analysis of data. A 'constructivist' grounded theory approach was adopted in this study as the position outlined by Charmaz aligned with the figurational perspective and was also thought to be a more pragmatic approach to research.

In the first instance, a literature review for this study was undertaken before the collection and analysis of data. Charmaz (2006) recognised, as did Elias (1970), that it was impossible to start from a 'blank slate'. Social researchers are inevitably involved in their field of study and this proximity means that they cannot avoid a measure of involvement in their own research and theorizing. As such, any substantive theory that emerges from the data is not free from the influence of earlier findings and theories. Charmaz (2006) and Elias (1970) adopt a common approach in this regard and advised social scientists to be reflexive during

the research process in an attempt to recognise and avoid any bias that results from their inevitable involvement in the research of social phenomena. Elias (1970) described this as taking a 'detour via detachment', where social scientists aim to go beyond an emotionally conceived view of the human world to increase their understanding during the research process. For Charmaz (2006) the aim was to undertake research with an open but informed mind, while for Elias (1970) the objective was to be sufficiently involved to understand the context and gain insights into the field of study, while also remaining relatively detached so that emotional influences could be identified and controlled.

The view of Charmaz regarding the early completion of a literature review complemented the figurational work of Elias on involvement and detachment. Not only were there commonalities here, but on a more pragmatic level it was also thought that the conventions around writing a research proposal and achieving ethical approval for the study also presented problems for delaying the literature review as some understanding of existing research had to be demonstrated from the beginning of the process.

Charmaz (2006) also argued that completing a literature review allowed social researchers to develop a level of theoretical sensitivity; that is, that they are able to familiarise themselves with, and evaluate the usefulness of existing theoretical frameworks that have been used to make sense of the subject matter. In this study the theoretical framework was based around figurational sociology, with the initial sensitising concepts being networks of interdependent relationships (or figurations), habitus, power and unintended consequences. By adopting a 'constructivist' grounded theory approach in this study, it was possible to identify the sensitising concepts that would be used to help make sense of the data. Not only did Charmaz (2006) advocate the sharing of the sensitising concepts at the outset of the research, but she

also recognised that these may change depending on their usefulness to the study. In this study, networks of interdependent relationships, habitus and also social class came to be main sensitising concepts that were used to develop an understanding of the nature and practice of primary PE. By accepting this level of flexibility in the research process Charmaz (2006) again finds common ground with Elias (1978). He also advocated a more fluid approach and was highly critical of static positions that in his view limited researchers and acted as a barrier to understanding. Elias (1978) was concerned instead with escaping the inflexible conventions that govern the understanding of knowledge and allowing social scientists to move beyond traditional constraints in their pursuit of more reality-congruent understanding.

Finally, Charmaz (2006) also maintained that the application of grounded theory research techniques should be adopted with a level of flexibility based on their appropriateness to the study. Again this is consistent with figurational sociology, as Bloyce (2004) notes that social scientists must choose their methods as being the most suitable means of answering their research questions. In this regard the research methods developed by grounded theorists are thought to be neutral, in that they can be used strategically by researchers during qualitative data analysis. Thus, while grounded theory offers a range of research tools, such as theoretical sampling and completing a literature review after independent analysis of the data, this study adopted four distinct aspects during data analysis. These were: the simultaneous collection and analysis of data; the coding of data into concepts and categories; the use of constant comparative analysis at all stages of data analysis, and; the writing of memos to explain categories and emerging thinking. These aspects of data analysis will now be considered in turn.

Simultaneous collection and analysis of data

In grounded theory the collection and analysis of data are linked, such that, in this study, the analysis of data from the interviews with SLs brought more subtle changes to the interview schedule. The selection of the interview questions was governed by the aim of developing a more adequate understanding of social processes involved in primary PE (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2009). The on-going analysis of data helped achieve that aim, insofar as while the main questions in the interview schedule were retained - to allow for comparison of findings - some of the follow up questions were directed to emerging areas of interest. This was seen for example when asking SLs about the time devoted to different activity areas within the PE curriculum; as it became clear that some schools avoided taking children swimming. The interview schedule was refined to follow this area of interest and additional questions revealed a link between school swimming lessons and the social class of the school catchment area. This flexibility is considered to be a major strength of semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012) and of Grounded Theory (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2009) as the concurrent collection and analysis of data, along with the latitude provided by semi-structured interviews, allows for more complex issues to be clarified and for data to be gathered that may otherwise have remained uncovered.

Here again, there is overlap between Charmaz (2006) and Elias (1978) as the latter also noted that the research process is characterised by the interdependence between theory and data and that the advancement of knowledge depends on the constant interplay, or 'two way traffic', between these two aspects. While Charmaz (2006) noted that theory was developed at each stage of data collection and analysis, with one aspect informing the other, Elias (1987) maintained that sociologists should relate their data to theory and theory to data in the aim of

developing a more reality-congruent understanding of the social phenomena under investigation.

Coding, constant comparative analysis and the writing of memos

Coding is the term given to the process of identifying and then categorizing data based on comparison with what has already been grouped (Roberts, 2009). In this study, the interviews conducted with primary teachers were audio recorded and then transcribed into word documents. On average each of the 36 interviews generated a document of over 7000 words (see Appendix 5 for an example). The data was then analysed to identify and compare the key themes that emerged within and across different interviews and settings. By comparing and grouping information in this way it was possible to interpret findings and use this to develop credible theories.

The process of breaking down, labelling and comparing data in this way is known as coding. It is a process that originated with grounded theory and has now become an accepted part of qualitative research, as it is considered to be an effective strategy for analysing data (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011). In following grounded theory, the coding process began with the identification of incidents (key words or themes) in the data and labelling them as concepts. As concepts were identified and labelled they were also compared with those that already existed. This constant comparative analysis enabled the researcher to decide if incidents in the transcribed data from interviews with primary teachers should be labelled in the same way as others or if a new concept should be created. When SLs, for example, were asked about the characteristics of a typical PE lesson, 'warm up' emerged as a distinct incident in the data and, as such, was labelled as a concept (T1).

The next level of the coding process is to use concepts, as the basic units of analysis, in the formation of categories. In this case, categories were developed from concepts to represent a higher more abstract level of analysis that began to make sense of the data. They were developed through a process of constant comparative analysis that clustered concepts together under one theme (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process reconnected the data to make sense of the links between separate parts. It relied on the breaking down and labelling of data as concepts in the first place, to then build a framework within which data could be organised and described. In relation to the example above, some of the other main concepts that were identified in relation to the characteristics of a typical primary PE lesson were skill practices (T2), games based (T3), teacher led (T4) and structured (T6). These were organised under the category of 'traditional teaching', while the further responses of simplified games (T5), maximise participation (T8), and inclusion of all (T9) were organised under the category of 'progressive teaching'.

The final aspect of the coding process was the use of memos. The creation of concepts and categories, and the links between them, were recorded, as part of the on-going process of analysing the data, in the form of memos. These memos were short notes which captured the thinking behind the grouping of concepts and also identified further questions to be explored. The writing of memos was integrated into the process of collecting and analysing data as ideas were considered fragile and worthy of documentation before they were forgotten and lost. As such, the writing of memos, to document emerging ideas about the relationships between concepts and categories, was a central part of the coding process. They illustrated the process of analysis, outlined emergent thinking and came to form part of the writing process itself (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2009). As an example of this, the memo written in the case of the characteristics of a typical PE lesson was 'Traditional teaching model

dominant – where this includes teacher led, skill practice and game. SLs chose to talk about a games lesson - does this show the relationship between PE and sport?'

Texts, whether spoken or written, can be interpreted in many ways, but the priority is the attempt to understand the perspective of the interviewee. Thus, the aim of the coding process in this study was to categorise content and identify patterns of responses, and to do so in a relatively detached manner. As such, for a handful of the interview transcripts, the process of coding was repeated after a period of time to ensure that the same themes were being identified and labelled in the data. In a similar way the researcher's supervisor also went through the process of coding a transcript so that comparisons could be made to ensure that the analysis of the data was as accurate and as free from bias as possible.

The analysis of data within this study was, therefore, informed by the grounded theory coding process of identifying concepts and categories and also the relationships between them. By adopting such systematic procedures to describe and deconstruct a text it was thought possible to determine the presence, meaning and relationships of certain words or concepts in a more detached manner (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This systematic procedure is considered to be an effective strategy for analysing data and has become a commonly used approach within qualitative research.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to explain and justify the research design and methods that have been adopted in the thesis; it has also aimed to describe and explain how the research was carried out. As such, this chapter has included a discussion of the nature and meaning of reality; it has explained how and why a case study research design and semi-structured interview

methods were used with a sample of 36 SLs, and finally; it has also examined the theoretical framework of grounded theory that has informed the analysis of data.

The findings chapter which follows expresses the key themes that have emerged from an analysis of the interviews with SLs. The individual teachers are identified by their role (SL) and a number reflecting their position in the sequence of interviews. Overall, the key themes that are identified are a combination of those found in the interview schedule and those that have emerged from the data.

Chapter Five

The content of the primary PE curriculum: What is taught?

This chapter will consider the content of the primary PE curriculum and what is actually taught in lessons. It will show, according to SLs, how much curricular PE is taught in primary schools, before examining two activity areas, namely games and swimming, in more detail.

How much curricular PE is taught?

When SLs were asked how many PE lessons the pupils had each week, all but one (35 of 36) stated that they had two *lessons* a week. While virtually all of the SLs claimed that their schools delivered two *lessons* of PE per week to each year group, there was a good deal more equivocation when it came to the two *hours* per week 'target'; in other words, while they were aware that the two individual PE lessons should equate to two hours of PE each week the SLs reported (sometimes marked) variations in practice. In some, rare, cases this led to pupils receiving more than the minimum threshold of two hours: "They have two a week, per class and it depends what kind of time it's at because for instance if its first thing in the morning, like Year 4s on a Thursday they get from nine o'clock till quarter past ten so they get an hour and a quarter; they're supposed to have an hour" (SL5). It was more common, however, for the SLs to observe that PE provision fell below, sometimes well below, the two hour 'target': "We do swimming and a PE lesson and that PE lesson is about forty minutes, so the juniors do two forty minute PE lessons a week" (SL11). There were times when the SLs appeared to acknowledge the disjuncture between principle (the so-called 'entitlement') and practice (the reality of what actually happened in their schools) somewhat reluctantly: "We try and make sure they have two a week" (SL9) – "They are meant to have two hours a week of PE" (SL4). In a number of cases, it became clear that the SLs were either unsure or

sceptical about what actually happened in practice: “I personally don’t think it always happens” (SL4).

With the difficulties of achieving the two-hour ‘target’ in mind, almost all (92%) of the SLs in the study observed that PE provision at their schools was regularly interrupted. When discussing the disjuncture between principle and practice, very many of the SLs were keen to explain and justify the gap between rhetoric and reality: “It depends on what’s going on in school” (SL15) because “with the pressures of the rest of the curriculum it’s not always possible” (SL15). More specifically, they identified a handful of particular barriers to meeting the two hours ‘target’. Prominent among the reasons the SLs gave for PE lessons being interrupted or cancelled was “the weather” – 50% identified the weather as a barrier: “They are usually two lessons a week but it does depend on the weather because obviously if it’s raining we can’t get outside for games” (SL1). The SLs frequently linked the issue of ‘bad’ weather to the impact of the seasons, reporting more interruptions to PE during the winter period: “Yes there are times in a primary school, especially during the winter months; look at last week’s weather, where we couldn’t get outside” (SL21). Over a third (39%) of the 36 SLs spoke of the effects of ‘bad’ weather in relation to either a dearth of suitable indoor facilities or their inaccessibility at particular times of the year. Sometimes this was explained in terms of competition for the indoor space; “If the weather is extremely bad and the hall is being used too they [their primary school teacher colleagues] can’t transfer from outside to inside, then that would mean it didn’t happen” (SL20) while, at other times, the indoor space was itself viewed as inadequate in relation to the number of children being taught; “Yeah, if it rains we’ve only got the hall and three groups” (SL10).

The problem of the logistics of delivering PE with limited and/or inadequate indoor facilities was said either to be caused or exacerbated by other 'events' on their school programmes – whether regular, annual or 'one-off': "because it's actually our dinner hall and its where we do assembly and if there's a visitor coming in to do something or a speaker then they usually set up in the hall so that often can make a big difference" (SL18). Not just the events themselves but the period leading up to and sometimes beyond events were reported as impacting deleteriously on the provision of PE: "it [PE] would be interrupted at times approaching whole school activities such as the Christmas play, SATs [Standard Attainment Tests], Easter church visits" (SL16). The added burden of these annual events and their impact on the use of shared space meant that any poor weather would bring an end to PE lessons:

> Christmas time, I would say Christmas time with the Christmas plays and the weather obviously outside because we can't go outside and if they're rehearsing for Christmas plays; we only have one hall so, yes you know; I mean we try not to but it's practically impossible. You know if the halls in use and its pouring down outside, for health and safety reasons we can't take them outside. (SL13)

Despite the fact that many of these events were predictable, the SLs reported that no alternative provision was made by their schools for the provision of PE in such circumstances. Indeed, it appeared that, in the main, the deleterious impact of poor weather and unavailable or inadequate indoor facilities on the provision of PE lessons was accepted as common-place by the SLs, as well as their classroom teacher colleagues: "because the weather's been bad...we've not been able to get out, and the demands on space have been ridiculous and sadly PE suffers" (SL3). There were very few exceptions to the (more-or-less) grudging acceptance among the SLs of the likely impact of inclement weather and/or the unavailability of indoor facilities, although one SL claimed that: "Very occasionally we try

and get wet weather gear on and just go out anyway" (SL9), while another appeared more resolute in ensuring that provision continued:

> No, because if the weathers bad I will teach PE in a classroom. If the hall's being used for drama, I've got my trolley, see my trolley so I've set up a classroom, put all the chairs, tables… I can turn this into a gymnasium. I've got mobile equipment which I can take round the school if the hall is being used for a pantomime or a play so it's never ever cancelled. Definitely. I tell you, I'll find a space because that's what I'm like. I will not cancel lessons because they love it; the children want to do it. (SL23)

Other SLs claimed that they tried to counter the effect of winter weather by providing more PE lessons in the summer months – although how this was achieved was far from clear: "Ideally if you can't get outside you would go in the hall but unfortunately the hall is then timetabled already so that would have a knock-on effect. What teachers try and do is they will try and make that time up at some point but hand on heart it doesn't always happen" (SL21).

With regard to the content of PE lessons and how much time is devoted to the subject, it is clear that the nominal two hour 'target' is not being achieved in the 36 schools within this sample. The entitlement for two hours of PE and school sport each week was a government aspiration that was first highlighted in *Schools Achieving Success* (DfES, 2001). This 'target' was subsequently included in the PE and School Sport policies of Labour governments up until 2010. The incoming Coalition Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, initially noted the expectation for schools to have embedded the good practice, collaboration and two hours of provision that came from PESSCL policies (DfE, 2010b). However, more recent government pronouncements have moved away from this position and have seemingly shown that the priorities for education lie elsewhere. *Beyond 2012 – outstanding physical education for all* (Ofsted, 2013) states that there is no statutory requirement for schools to devote a specific amount of time to PE, and that two hours was an aspirational target introduced by the

previous administration. This echoed a statement made by the Department for Education in 2012 noting that, while every school was expected to maintain their current levels of provision, the two hour goal could not be enforced and, as such, could only be seen as a desirable rather than a mandatory outcome (DfE, 2012a).

While the Government's position has changed, official studies seemingly show a high level of compliance with the two hour 'target'. In 2009, Ofsted stated that the vast majority of primary schools provided two hours of PE in the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 (Ofsted, 2009). This statement was largely repeated by Ofsted in 2013, as one of the key findings for primary PE was that most schools provided two hours each week. These findings were also confirmed by the final *PE and Sport Survey* (DfE, 2010) – which claimed that around 94% of primary aged children were participating in at least 120 minutes of curriculum time PE each week – as well as the Department for Education (DfE, 2014b), which observed that primary pupils spend on average 122 minutes a week 'doing' PE.

The data from the present study suggests, however, that these official findings were inaccurate and that the vast majority of primary aged children in the sample are not getting two hours of PE a week. The present data is more consistent with the findings of Harris, Cale and Musson (2011), who similarly doubted the adequacy of official figures, insofar as, while the SLs acknowledged that two lessons were allocated to PE each week, they also demonstrated that timetables were far from being an accurate representation of the actual PE lessons taught. The SLs recognised in the first instance that there were some difficulties in claiming two hours from two lessons a week, as PE lessons were of varying duration, sometimes more but often less than one hour. They also noted a further difficulty in the accurate measurement of participation, as those involved in completing the official surveys

were thought at times to embellish the extent of their activity. More significantly SLs also recognised that PE provision was commonly interrupted and that lessons did get cancelled. The weather, lack of indoor space and the conflicting demands of other school events were all shown to cause disruption. Very few SLs claimed that significant efforts were made to overcome these interruptions; the cancelling of PE lessons was seen as regrettable but on the whole accepted as common-place and legitimate practice.

This points to underlying issues in the networks of PE, as the random and regular disruption to learning would be unlikely to be tolerated in other subjects, certainly not in the core subjects of maths and English. The fact that PE lessons are so readily and regularly cancelled is indicative of the already marginal status of PE in education in general and the culture of individual primary schools in particular. The marginalization of PE in primary schools has been exacerbated by developments in recent years, most notably by the introduction of market forces into the education system through the publication of National Curriculum test results in school league tables (Gillard, 2011). The prioritisation of the core subjects in preparation for National Curriculum tests (often referred to as SATs), along with the introduction of numeracy and literacy hours in primary schools, has a led to a reduction in curriculum time and status for other subjects (Griggs, 2010). The overall impact of neo-liberal educational policies (Ball, 2007) is seemingly a two-tier system where non-core subjects such as PE are relegated to a lower status.

The prioritization of core subjects has also impacted on the time devoted to PE within ITE. The declining allocation has brought concerns over the adequacy of PE training, with many new teachers being thought to lack the confidence, subject knowledge and specialist skills needed to teach PE effectively (Blair & Capel, 2008, 2011; Caldecott, Warburton & Waring,

2006; Griggs, 2008; Harris, Cale & Musson 2011; Keay, 2011: Ofsted, 2005, 2009, 2013; Pickup, 2006; Smith, 2013; Ward, 2013). Moreover, without adequate training, generalist teachers, who typically have little if any personal interest in PE, are often reluctant to engage with the subject at all (Tsangaridou, 2012).

Finally, the desire of many generalist teachers to avoid teaching PE is evidently made easier by the fact that other established teachers within the immediate school network share their limited motivation towards PE and are under similar pressures to prioritise core subjects. Elias would contend that the habitus or 'second nature' of primary teachers is formed by early experiences, but also shaped by the figurations of which they are subsequently part of (Green, 2003). In this instance primary teachers who enter the profession with little motivation towards PE, see the hierarchical status of subjects being endorsed by the beliefs and actions of more experienced (and more powerful) colleagues. This confirms their own hegemonic ideology and ensures a great deal of continuity in the practice of teachers. The result is an established position, where the cancelling of PE lessons is seen by teachers as a regrettable but necessary, and even inevitable, custom within primary education.

Having examined the rhetoric and reality of the time allocated to PE lessons in primary schools, this chapter will now consider two specific aspects of the PE timetable in more detail; namely games and swimming.

The prioritisation and dominance of games

While the 2014 NCPE (DfE, 2013a) is less prescriptive than its predecessors there remain expectations around subject content at the various Key Stages. At Key Stage 1, for instance, the focus is on developing and applying basic movement skills, participating in games and

performing dances. At Key Stage 2, three further dimensions are introduced: achieving personal bests, participating in outdoor and adventurous activities and developing aspects of fitness and movement through, for example, gymnastics and athletics. The expectations around swimming are unchanged, with this area to be addressed in either Key Stage 1 or 2 and for all children to meet the target of being able to swim at least 25 metres.

When asked about the provision of PE, over four fifths (86%) of the PESLs referred to the statutory orders and noted that their own school PE curricula matched the national requirements in terms of guiding principles, content and delivery. One SL commented thus: "I have to follow the national scheme for PE so, as I say, last term it was dance and swimming, this one I think it's ball games and something else and then next term its gymnastics" (SL13). Thus and perhaps unsurprisingly given the recency of the 2014 NCPE guidelines, the language used by SLs tended to correspond more closely to the previous version (NCPE 2000) than the current one. In this regard, reference was often made to PE in terms of a list of activity areas rather than the content of the new 'orders':

> Right, we do gymnastics, dance, tag rugby, netball, basketball, hockey. Just been doing tri-golf, athletics, tennis, cricket, rounders. We've done some more orienteering. We do creative games where the children think up their own games given equipment and stuff. Um, swimming, football … is there anything I've missed out? (SL7)

In this vein, the so-called 'activity areas' of games, gymnastics and dance typically dominated the SLs' initial comments about the curriculum, seemingly not least because these areas have been mainstays of primary PE since well before the advent of NCPE in 1992: "Generally we do try and get a balance and I have planned for this next year coming to do a balance of games, gym, and dance" (SL12). Of the other three established activity areas – swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities (OAA) – swimming was

delivered by all but two of the 36 schools as part of the curriculum, while athletics was seen more as a seasonal activity: "then in the summer term, sure, we do a lot of athletics" (SL15). Finally, OAA (which has a more central position within the new NCPE) tended to be mentioned by the SLs in relation to off-site visits: "We do a lot of residentials, every year group apart from reception go on a residential of some kind every year to do outdoor and adventurous stuff" (SL6).

While all 36 SLs in the study claimed – as in the above examples – that their schools delivered all aspects of NCPE the area of games was evidently pre-eminent, in terms of both time and status. Thus, around two thirds (61%) of SLs observed that games received a greater proportion of time allocated to primary PE: "We're supposed to cover it all I think, but if I'm honest we're just top heavy on games and sport" (SL5). The dominance of games was often clear in the way that the curriculum was organised, with games being taught for the duration of the school year in one of the two PE lessons a week, and the rest of the national curriculum requirements delivered in the remaining lesson:

> Every week is a games one, and it changes each term so they might do rounder's and cricket in the summer, tag rugby and netball maybe in the winter, or basketball and then spring term, hockey…so we always try and have a games themed one and then the other one would either be dance, gymnastics, athletics. (SL9)

The PE SLs provided three reasons for the dominance of games activities in their schools. The most commonly cited was their own enjoyment of teaching games, one SL spoke for many when s/he observed; "It's something I enjoy, it's something I'm good at, it's something I've got lots of experience in teaching" (SL16). The SLs also expressed the view that their classroom colleagues felt more confident and at ease when delivering the games area of the PE curriculum: "Well there is a definite leaning to the ones they feel confident with – football, netball; so invasion games and that sort of thing" (SL8). Thus, the inclusion of more

games activities in the PE timetable by the SLs was, in part, an attempt by them to cater for their colleagues' preferences. In this regard, it was a pragmatic strategy to ensure that their colleagues would actually deliver the curricula the SLs planned: "I have actually weighted it higher on games now, rightly or wrongly, but I was trying to be realistic as to what they would teach" (SL12).

In this regard, it became increasingly apparent from the SLs' observations that their tendency to prioritise games when drawing up the PE curricula for their schools was a process of mutual reinforcement. In other words, not only did the SLs themselves favour and feel more comfortable teaching games but so too did their fellow teachers, albeit for different reasons: the former preferred games for positive reasons – they were good at them – whereas for the latter, the classroom teachers, the reasons tended to be negative – games were the lesser of several evils. This general favouring of games appeared to be reinforced by the reactions of their pupils, who also favoured games: "They just love, they love playing proper games, even the year 2s are mad about dodgeball and football especially" (SL5).

The final justification offered by the SLs for the pre-eminence of games in KS1 and 2 PE was that it fitted in with the tendency for extra-curricular PE to be dominated by sports clubs and competitions. In this regard, curricular PE lessons were viewed by some SLs as *preparation* for extra-curricular PE. One SL, for example, observed that "The way we...tend to prioritise in the juniors is based around the competitions that are coming up because across the year you've got rugby to start with and then you go on into basketball, and I kind of structure and prioritise based on what competitions we know are coming up" (SL15). Thus, a common theme across the 36 schools was the extra-curricular programme of sporting fixtures, competitions and tournaments coming to dictate the content of the primary PE curriculum.

This tendency was justified by the SLs in two main ways. First, as a means of familiarising those children likely to be involved with the rules and conventions of particular games in preparation for a forthcoming event: "I know next term there's a handball competition coming up so I tend to try and swop and I'll maybe do a handball session, just to try and get the children to know the rules and things" (SL13). Second, and in a similar vein, the use of curricular PE lessons as a vehicle for developing their pupils' knowledge of games was viewed as way of preparing children to be competitive – with PE lessons becoming, in effect, training for the tournament: "rounders is coming up, I did six weeks beforehand of batting skills, basic batting skills so they've all got an idea, of the basics and then Jane takes them on to the next level if they're ready" (SL3). Some SLs clearly viewed this preparation time in lessons as almost a pre-requisite for taking part in the competition: "I mean there's not much point going if they're going to, haven't practised and stuff…I like to take them, when they've played ...they know the rules and they stand a sporting chance of winning" (SL5).

When it came to outlining the content of PE lessons, most SLs referred to the NCPE in their responses and showed that their curriculum planning was arranged around the statutory orders. The new national curriculum was introduced into schools in September 2014 (DfE, 2013a) and includes clear expectations around what should be taught at each Key Stage. The SLs seemingly complied with these expectations and reflected a key finding of Ofsted (2013, p.5) that 'Most schools...have enhanced their provision to achieve a good balance of games, gymnastics, swimming, dance and athletic activities'. But while the SLs referred to the different areas of the curriculum and Ofsted believed there to be a 'good balance', it was clear that in most schools games remained by far the dominant activity.

The dominance of traditional games within the primary PE curriculum is well established (Ward, 2013; Ward & Quennerstedt, 2014) and largely attributed by Ward and Griggs (2011) to the subject's close historical association with sport. More recently, the Government's prioritisation of competitive sport (seen, for example, in the School Games Kitemark introduced to recognise sporting provision [Youth Sport Trust, 2012] and the new NCPE which clearly states the Government's position on the value of competition [DfE, 2013a]), has given sport, in general, and games, in particular, a higher profile within primary PE. Where government policies have several aims, it would seem appropriate to question whether they are mutually compatible (Green, 2008). In this instance two of the four NCPE targets are for pupils to 'develop competence to excel in a broad range of activities' and 'to engage in competitive sports and activities' (DfE, 2013a, p.198). The data from this study shows the contradictory effects of government policies, as the aim of developing competence across a breadth of activities has been undermined by the promotion of competitive games and sport.

The privileged position of sport and traditional team games was shown in the content and timing of the curriculum. According to SLs, Key Stage 1 and 2 PE lessons matched the activities that dominated the extracurricular timetable and were organised around the timings of the major inter-school competitions and tournaments. The relationship between PE and school sport, with the 'tail' being seen to 'wag the dog', was largely accepted as a pragmatic arrangement by SLs. It allowed them to familiarise children with the rules and conventions of the games that were to be played between schools, while also giving them time to practice and develop their skills. In effect, for many SLs, PE lessons became team training sessions designed to prepare children for extracurricular sport and provided evidence for what Ward (2013, p.563) described as a 'preoccupation with performance and competition'. In this regard, the aims and content of primary PE lessons were unwittingly influenced by the

'performativity' which characterised the marketization of education (Ball, 2013); that is, that the practice of SLs in PE lessons appears to have been swayed by the desire to achieve success in extracurricular competition and create an attractive public image to draw future 'customers' to the school.

The preeminent position of games was also shown in part to reflect the perceived preference of many SLs and generalists for this activity area. The status hierarchy within PE, where games is by far the dominant activity area, again reflects the habitus of SLs and generalist primary teachers; which is shaped through their early PE experiences as pupils and their on-going engagement in the school figuration as teachers (Bowles & O'Sullivan, 2012). Indeed the greater involvement of sports clubs and coaches with primary schools has included SLs and generalist teachers in increasingly complex networks where competitive sport and team games are promoted as a central part of PE. These relationships have exacerbated the normalization of the 'PE as sport and games' ideology and have ensured a great deal of continuity in the practice of teachers, with games being the activity area that SLs and generalists would most likely and habitually choose to teach.

The belief that SLs and generalist teachers enjoy and feel more confident in teaching this area of the PE curriculum than any other is consistent with the findings of Ofsted (2009, 2013) who have found a similar preference for the teaching of games. In this regard, the inclusion by SLs of more games activities within the PE timetable was an attempt to appease their colleagues and provide a curriculum that they were more likely to teach. This partly pragmatic strategy fitted with SLs' own preferences, and indeed what they thought to be those of the pupils, for a more games based PE experience. From the SLs' perspective this was an opportunity to teach an area that they enjoyed and were good at, while for classroom

teachers, games was sometimes viewed as the least problematic activity area. By comparison generalist classroom teachers were less willing to engage with the teaching of dance and in particular gymnastics; as deficiencies in subject knowledge and confidence in the latter were thought to increase the likelihood of an accident. While games was favoured by generalist primary teachers as the lesser evil, its teaching was still considered by Ward and Griggs (2011) to be an area of weakness within primary PE. Whatever the motivation, be it a positive pull towards games or a more negative avoidance of other activities, it was clear that the preferences of SLs and generalist teachers were instrumental in designing the curriculum around games.

Having examined the dominance of games within the primary PE curriculum, this section will conclude with an analysis of swimming; as questions around this activity area revealed some significant variations in practice that are seemingly linked to social class.

The particular case of swimming

The statutory requirements for PE changed with the introduction of the new curriculum in 2014, but one aspect that remained was the expectation for all children to swim as part of their primary school education. According to the NCPE, pool based lessons can be introduced at either Key Stage 1 or 2, but the target is for all children to be able to swim a 25 meter length unaided by the end of year 6 (DfE, 2013a). A report by the Amateur Swimming Association (2013) estimated that it would take 22 hours to teach the content of the swimming curriculum, but also noted that most children spend only 8 hours in swimming lessons. Within the sample, the amount of time that primary schools dedicated to swimming varied greatly. Some timetabled an annual block of lessons for all children in Key Stages 1 and 2, while others avoided this supposedly statutory aspect of the curriculum altogether.

Over a third of schools (38%) committed significant amounts of time to swimming with one SL stating that; "Ours also go swimming…[for half a term] each year from year two upwards" (SL4). This is typical of provision in these settings, as it is characterised by an annual commitment to a number of swimming lessons across (and often beyond) the whole of Key Stage 2. Around half of schools (47%) also provided notable amounts of swimming time, but this was confined to 'most years' within Key Stage 2. One teacher noted that they had; "sessions for years 3, 4 and 5 so they go on a Friday…with half an hour of that in the pool, so yeah they go...three terms throughout the juniors" (SL14). Finally, in a small number of schools (15%) the time allocated to swimming was restricted to one year group, or in some cases did not happen at all. In these settings the average time dedicated to swimming was notably less than the 8 hours per child average that is claimed by the ASA (2013). In one setting the SL explained that they had:

> ...nine weeks [of half hour lessons] in the whole of their junior career. Dreadful; because of the cost. They used to do more. I don't know if there is an actual minimum that they're allowed or that they're supposed to do. They used to do more; they used to do it in the whole of the year 4; now they just do it for a term in year 4 and its only nine lessons. And it's a shame because it was really good. (SL12)

The views of SLs on this aspect of the curriculum were generally mixed, in that they recognised the value of swimming as a life skill and wanted children to learn; but were also frustrated by aspects of the provision. They questioned the value of taking pupils who are already proficient swimmers, with one SL stating that;

> There are certain groups that I think you can make progress with and others you wonder how much of an impact it actually has. Like your top swimmers...they're usually the ones who are having lessons every week all year round anyway so what extra they gain from them I'm not sure? (SL14)

In a similar vein, there was also a level of frustration with the organisation of lessons into comparatively short units, with some doubt as to how much impact this had on the progress of non-swimmers. One teacher noted that; "These ten week blocks because it's like half hour; well it's even like 20 minutes by the time you're in, it's just not enough for those children that have got very limited ability" (SL15). With another similarly recognising that "In the ten weeks we're there, if you can't swim, ten weeks isn't enough" (SL25).

Almost all of the schools follow this pattern of dividing their Key Stage 2 swimming provision into half term or termly units of lessons. This arrangement does seemingly frustrate teachers as comparatively short units of lessons are not seen to be conducive to learning. In contrast a few other schools organised their swimming lessons over the duration of one year in Key Stage 2, with one SL noting that "They go once a week on a Thursday morning. They start in September and go right through to the half term after Easter. We've found here that doing it as a whole block a solid block has made a difference" (SL32).

A further frustration that emerged from discussions with SLs is the cost, both financially and in terms of time, of taking children to swimming lessons during the school day. One SL noted how little swimming time is gained when taking children out for the afternoon;

> It was the whole, when we were doing it, it was the whole afternoon. We used to leave straight after lunch and we'd get back at three o'clock... and they'd swim for about 20 minutes. If I'm honest as well, swimming coaches are another bit of a bugbear of mine ...in that 20 minutes, how much swimming is actually taking place? (SL10)

The annoyance of disrupting the school day to gain quite limited swimming time was added to, with further concern at the cost of taking children in the first place;

> It's quite expensive to the school because we pay for the actual swimming coach and then we pay part of the cost to get to the baths; we only ask for a £20 retainer fee from the parents. Some parents refuse to pay it because they say, well if it's part of the curriculum then you pay it, so it's actually turned out to be quite an expensive thing for us because we've had to train the staff as well. (SL18)

In a few instances schools have reacted to these issues by altering their pattern of provision. The large scale disruption to school day, the minimal time swimming and the high cost of transport has led some schools to halve the number of trips to the swimming pool, but double the length of lessons whilst there. This approach is thought to have reduced costs and disruption, while maintaining (or even increasing) the amount of pool time for children. In two other schools however, the same frustrations around swimming lessons have prompted a more drastic response. The time and financial cost of lessons, coupled with concerns for pupil learning, have caused these two schools to reconsider their approach and stop their swimming provision altogether. The SL at one of these schools explained that; "When we did it, it was taking up a vast amount of time and we actually got a number of complaints from parents about the fact that their children could already swim. Why were they losing so much time out of school to go and be in the pool for about 20 minutes?" (SL10). It would seem that for some, swimming lessons did not constitute time well spent. The SL elaborated on this argument and explained their approach;

> The way that we do it is we send out a questionnaire and the questionnaire is signed by the parent saying, first of all would you like us to put swimming into place or continue with what we've got at the moment, secondly how far can your child swim? When they get to year 5 anyone who says 'my child can't swim' we fund their swimming lessons. So like this summer there was one boy and what we've said to his mum is, we'll pay for him to have a series of 10 swimming lessons during the summer holidays...in that sense, to me it's a better use of the children's time. (SL10)

This argument of recognising that the vast majority could already meet the 25 meter target and that additional school lessons were, in their view, a waste of time and money, was similarly put forward by the SL at another school:

> We're in a fairly affluent area. The vast majority of children come to school already swimming, going to swimming lessons. Our budget has been cut drastically, which you probably heard. To get us to the baths it costs £200 for the coach per week; and they've got to have 10 lessons. But what we found is that we are only really catering for about 3 children out of thirty that are absolute non swimmers and possibly another 3 or 4 who are swimming, but not the 25 meters. So what we've decided this year and we'll have to see how it goes is that we will mop up the non-swimmers, and just take a non-swimmer group in year 5 or year 6. So those children and those children only will go to a local baths... It is something that has been in our mind for a while because we are taking 27 very, very able swimmers and that's costing an awful lot and taking a lot of curriculum time to take them to the lessons. (SL35)

One issue that has been recognised with this approach, however, is that it relies on the accurate assessment of a child's swimming ability by their own parents. The same SL noted that:

> We've also got to rely on the fact that we are going to have children and their parents admitting that their children can't swim. And that's something that worries me slightly because as they get older children are not quite so keen to say actually I can't swim, mainly because they see it as admitting a failure; both the parents and the children. They don't want to be seen as being different. And that's my concern that those children might not be picked up because their parents won't say that they can't swim. (SL35)

One further aspect that has emerged from this change in provision is that the two schools in question are in more affluent areas, with a very low percentage of children (3% and 1.5%) eligible for free school meals. This is significantly below the average for the whole sample of 14.4%. The approach adopted by these two schools is part of a pattern of provision that seemingly links the time devoted to school swimming lessons with the social class of the catchment area. When identifying those primary schools that in contrast devote most time to swimming, with lessons typically spread across both Key Stages, more than half are located in the most deprived areas. Indeed the average number of children eligible for free school meals in the schools that devote most time to swimming is 21.8%.

When they were asked about the swimming ability of their children all of the SLs who considered it to be poor, were located in the schools that were in the most deprived areas. One teacher noted that; "Some of them are petrified. I was surprised actually by how many children couldn't swim...they had no experience of it at all" (SL31). This was echoed by another SL who said simply that s/he "couldn't believe how many children couldn't swim" (SL4). The limited ability of these children was linked by SLs to a lack of opportunity and parental support: "Half the problem here is that the parents don't take them; it's why a lot of them can't swim, because we do have a lot of non-swimmers" (SL24).

The children's limited swimming ability caused a relatively high level of concern amongst SLs: "they don't do it. I've taken kids to the pool and they've never been there before and, at like nine and ten; that's quite scary I think" (SL4). The main reason for this disproportionate reaction (by comparison with a concern for learning in other activity areas) was the unique importance that was attached to swimming; "I think it's an important life skill, especially when we live on an island and with so much water about" (SL29).

As a consequence of their children's limited ability, in what was considered to be a uniquely important area of learning, the teachers felt compelled to devote significant and sometimes additional time to swimming lessons. The aim of developing a basic level of personal competence in swimming meant that some schools were introducing lessons at an earlier age; "A lot of schools will just do it in year 5 and 6 but we were finding that they couldn't swim, so we introduced it from an earlier age to help them really; it just helps them get a bit better" (SL1). Alternatively, other schools in more deprived areas were extending provision for older children; "it's really important that children are able to swim so anybody in year 6 that couldn't swim a width was able to go onto a booster session towards the end of the summer"

(SL13). While it may have been tackled in different ways, the main consideration of these schools was to address an issue that they recognised in the physical education of their children; "...next year we're taking them swimming every single week because it was kind of flagged up that they need that opportunity" (SL4).

It would seem that schools in more deprived areas are devoting more time to swimming to compensate for the limited opportunities that these children have to acquire this 'life skill' away from school. As one SL noted school swimming lessons were something of a safety net for those children who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity: "...for those families who aren't doing it outside of school, I do think it's good to have it as part of the curriculum" (SL20).

While primary schools tend to prioritise games activities, the data from this study shows that they do, with very few exceptions, follow the requirements of the NCPE. These statutory requirements include the expectation for children to swim as part of their primary school education and more specifically for each child to be able to complete a 25 metre length unaided, by the end of year 6. The data from the present study revealed, however, wide variations in the amount of time dedicated to this statutory aspect of the PE curriculum. In some settings pupils began their swimming experience in Key Stage 1 and continued to attend lessons throughout every year of Key Stage 2. In other settings pupils did not attend swimming lessons at all.

In the schools that offered limited provision, SLs expressed their frustrations with the inefficient organisation of swimming lessons. More specifically their duration, at typically thirty minutes a week, was seen as being somewhat ineffective in helping the progress of

non-swimmers and a ‘waste of time’ for those that were already proficient. These concerns were further compounded by the cost and time spent travelling to the swimming pool. In the most inconvenient relative locations, half a day of schooling could be sacrificed for one half hour swimming lesson. This illustrated the issue identified by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA, 2013), that limited access to facilities was a major reason for what they consider to be the restricted amount of lesson time for swimming in primary schools.

In the schools that offered no swimming provision, the frustrations with the organisation of lessons had prompted head teachers to seemingly ignore the requirements of the national curriculum. While an attempt was made to provide for those that admitted to being non swimmers, this decision revealed the relative autonomy of head teachers and the increased power that they exerted over the decision making process. Elias (1994) argued that human behaviour is best understood in the context of the relationships that exist between individuals or groups. He maintained that the interdependent relationships between people in their figurations inherently involve fluctuating aspects of power (Elias & Dunning, 1993) and that this can act to enable or constrain the behaviour of individuals or groups (Rojek, 1986). The powerful position of the head teacher was attributed by Ball (2007) to the neo-liberal policies of recent decades which have given them greater autonomy in deciding how resources are used to ‘compete’ with other schools in the education ‘market’. The power of head teacher is fundamentally important to PE (Rainer et al, 2012) as in this instance it is clear that despite the increased monitoring of the subject by Ofsted (Prime Minister’s Office, 2013) they were still able to avoid the necessity of following (to the letter at least) the supposedly statutory requirements of the NCPE.

The schools which offered no swimming provision were also marked by their relative affluence, with a very low percentage of children (2.3%) eligible for free school meals. This is significantly below the average for the whole sample (14.4%), and lower still than the national average for primary schools (19.2%) (DfE, 2013). The approach adopted by these schools was part of a pattern of provision that seemingly linked the time devoted to school swimming lessons with the social class of the catchment area. When identifying those primary schools that in contrast devoted most time to swimming, with provision typically across Key Stage 2 and into Key Stage 1, over half were located in the most deprived areas. In fact, the average number of children eligible for free school meals in the schools that devote most time to swimming was 21.8%.

Findings from the present data show therefore, a correlation between time devoted to school swimming lessons and the percentage of children claiming free school meals. It would seem that in more affluent areas parents were able to afford private swimming lessons and that, as a result, the children were more experienced and skilled. In contrast, in deprived catchments the SLs noted the poor level of ability and relative inexperience of their children; and in so doing highlighted the established relationship between social class and participation levels (Green, Smith & Roberts, 2005). Put simply, the social class and wealth of parents in some catchment areas meant that they were able (and wanted) to pay for private swimming lessons. This extended the sporting capital of middle class children and even established the early stages of a sporting habitus that would possibly sustain future participation in that activity.

The SLs in working class schools were very aware of this relationship and recognised that as many families could not afford to pay for private swimming lessons, school provision came to be more important. School swimming lessons in more deprived areas were seen as the only

means of teaching a uniquely important life skill and achieving the statutory requirement of completing 25 metres unaided by the end of year 6. In short, schools in working class areas were disproportionately affected by the NCPE requirement to swim 25 metres, and had to devote more time to this aspect of PE as their children were not as competent as those from middle class families. The case of swimming illustrates the usefulness of the concept of unintended consequences, insofar as it exemplifies not only the unintended consequence of a policy initiative but also the undesirable effect on the rest of the curriculum. Schools in more deprived areas were devoting more time to swimming to compensate for limitations in ability, while a couple of schools in the more affluent areas appeared to assume the likelihood of their pupils possessing, or being socialized into, this particular form of sporting capital. They were able to take advantage of private swimming lessons and stop this provision altogether. This in turn had an impact on the rest of the school curriculum as those in working class areas had less time for other subjects and were potentially disadvantaged in their education.

It would seem that paying for private swimming lessons extends the sporting and cultural capital of children; where the latter relates to the range of attributes and competencies that enable an individual to achieve a higher social status and in turn secure greater economic rewards. Cultural capital is considered to be directly proportional to economic capital in that more affluent parents are more able to access activities which will enrich the lives of their children (Evans & Davies, 2010) and provide an advantage for them in later life. In this instance, access to private swimming lessons appeared to exacerbate class related differences, at an early age, in sporting capital and unintentionally provided an educational gain for more affluent children.

Conclusion

This chapter has described what, according to SLs, is taught in primary PE lessons. In the first instance while two lessons a week are included on school timetables this rarely equates to two hours of PE in reality; not least because lessons are routinely cancelled in primary schools because of the impact of adverse weather, limited facilities and the demands of other school events. While seen as regrettable, this situation is tolerated by teachers and indeed by SLs, and reflects the comparatively low status of the subject. The avoidance of PE lessons by classroom teachers is made easier by the realisation that other established teachers within the immediate school network share their limited motivation towards the subject. The habitus of primary teachers in relation to PE is formed by early experiences, but is also shaped by their involvement in school figurations and, as such, the beliefs and actions of more experienced colleagues do confirm the hierarchical status of subjects.

There is also a hierarchy within PE, with games activities dominating the primary PE timetable. The prioritization of games reflects the preferences of teachers and pupils, and also the high profile of extracurricular school sport. The inclusion of PE SLs in increasingly complex networks has done little to challenge the 'PE as sport and games' ideology, as sports clubs and coaches actively promote competitive sport and team games as the central part of PE. These relationships have normalized the prioritization of games, with this activity area being the one that SLs and generalists are most likely to choose to teach.

Finally, swimming emerged as an area of interest as considerable variation was seen in the approaches adopted by different primary schools. Most notably, some schools avoided the seemingly statutory requirement of providing swimming lessons as they did not want to incur the financial and educational costs that this involved when almost all pupils were already

proficient. One unforeseen outcome of the NCPE requirement was that only those schools in more affluent catchment areas, where parents paid for private swimming lessons, were able to discontinue their provision and endow pupils with more time for learning in the classroom.

Chapter Six

Who teaches and leads primary Physical Education?

In March 2013, the Coalition Government introduced their new policy for PE and school sport: The *Primary PE and Sport Premium* (Prime Minister's Office, 2013). The Premium, which on average amounted to £9,250 per primary school – the equivalent of around two days per week of a primary teacher's time – was ring-fenced and provided directly to head teachers, making schools accountable for their spending, including their PE teaching provision. The Coalition's direction of travel in terms of policy towards primary school PE was confirmed in 2014, when the Government announced that investment in the *Premium* would be extended for a further five years up until 2020 (DCMS, DfE & Number 10, 2014).

The introduction of the Premium occurred in a context in which the 'traditional' model of delivering PE in primary schools – whereby a so-called 'generalist' classroom teacher is responsible for teaching all curriculum subjects to her or his class – has been in place for a century or more, not only in the UK (Blair & Capel, 2011) but worldwide (Tsangaridou, 2012). More recently, however, some teaching of PE in primary schools in England and Wales has been undertaken by sports coaches (Blair & Capel, 2011; Smith, 2013): sports coaches – initially employed in secondary as well as primary schools to deliver extra-curricular PE/sporting activities – are, it seems, increasingly likely to deliver National Curriculum PE (NCPE). These coaches tend to possess teaching and coaching qualifications awarded by national governing bodies of sport rather than educational teaching qualifications *per se*; and are thought as a consequence, to lack basic pedagogical skills (Griggs, 2010).

The Premium increased the onus on schools to, among other things, up-skill generalist teachers and employ sports coaches in order to improve curricular and extra-curricular PE

and sport provision. According to a Department for Education (DfE, 2014) survey, almost three-quarters (70%) of primary schools in England reported using the Premium in 2013-14 to make changes to the staffing of curricular PE. Of these, the vast majority (82% – up from 37% the previous year) reported the use of external sport coaches to deliver curricular PE, while more than half (54% – up from 22%) and just under one-third (29% – up from 9%) reported increased usage of specialist PE teachers and School Sport Co-ordinators (SSCo) respectively. All-in-all, it has become apparent that PE has increasingly become an exception to the traditional generalist model for delivery of subjects in primary schools.

This chapter aims, in the first instance, to identify who teaches primary PE and what impact this has had on the development of the subject. The second section of this chapter aims to extend this analysis by identifying who leads primary PE, and how teachers have been prepared and selected for a subject leadership role.

The teachers of primary PE

Although, historically, PE in primary schools in England tended to be taught by what are commonly referred to as generalist classroom teachers, it was clear from the SLs' answers that times have changed. According to the SLs, nowadays, primary PE lessons are taught by one, or a combination of, three different groups: generalist classroom teachers, specialist primary PE teachers and sports coaches – usually hired ('outsourced') from commercial providers. Only one in 10 (11%) of the SLs' 36 schools delivered PE exclusively via generalist classroom teachers, whereas in a further two-thirds (69%) of schools, the delivery of PE revolved around a 'generalist plus one' model; where the 'plus one' was either a sports coach (44% of schools) or a specialist PE teacher (25%).

The models used to teach primary PE

Staffing Model	**Frequency of model in sample schools**	**Number of schools**	**FSM %**
Generalist and Coaches	44%	16	11.5%
Generalist and Specialist	25%	9	17.0%
Generalist alone	11%	4	11.1%
Coaches alone	8%	3	20.1%
Specialist alone	6%	2	23%
Specialist and Coaches	6%	2	1.9%

There were two main approaches within the most commonly adopted 'generalist plus sports coach' model. The first involved a formal arrangement whereby the class teacher and sports coach both led one of the two timetabled PE lessons each week. The other approach was for SLs to use sports coaches to 'cover' the 'weaker' (in terms of PE-related expertise) generalist teacher colleagues: "We know who feels more confident delivering PE sessions and … I wouldn't give coaches to myself or certain year groups because I know those teachers are confident with PE" (SL27). Thus, while some generalist teachers retained responsibility for both PE lessons each week, some taught no PE. Typically, however, schools tended to use a combination of teachers and sports coaches to deliver curricular PE.

The next most common model adopted was said to be the use of a generalist class teacher *alongside* a specialist primary PE teacher – typically the SL for PE, her or himself. The 'classroom teacher plus specialist PE teacher' model replicated the 'classroom teacher plus sports coach' model wherein generalists shared responsibility for PE lessons with the sporting

or PE experts. Sometimes this too consisted of a more formal arrangement where the specialists and generalists were responsible for a lesson each; while in other schools, the SLs reported a more informal arrangement between colleagues that allowed individual classroom teachers to teach in their preferred subject areas:

> We've trialled [a] kind of specialist teaching in a way and we've had teachers here who have been like specialists in art and art's just not my thing at all; they've come through and taken my class for art and I've taken their class for PE and that's worked really well. (SL15)

Alongside the majority of schools – where the SLs reported relying, at least in part, on the 'generalist plus one' model – a few schools (8%) used coaches to teach all of their schools' PE lessons. In such circumstances, schools tended to recruit a number of different coaches to lead different classes depending on what was deemed necessary at the time. A small number (6%) of schools also claimed to have adopted a 'specialist' model whereby all PE lessons were taught by a specialist PE teacher, invariably the PE SL, while a handful (6%) of other schools used a combination of a specialist PE teacher and sports coaches to deliver curricular PE.

All-in-all, some combination of generalist classroom teacher with either a specialist PE teacher or sports coach was the dominant model for delivering primary PE in the 36 schools in the study. Only a very small number of schools were persisting with the traditional, purely generalist model and even then it tended to be supported by the use of other adults on a more *ad hoc* basis. Indeed, with the involvement of sports coaches in the delivery of primary PE in mind, it was noteworthy that several of the handful (11%) of SLs who claimed that their schools used a purely generalist system – where the classroom teacher was responsible for teaching all PE lessons across the school year – conceded that coaches were brought in to 'support' some PE lessons; albeit on a more informal and infrequent basis.

Having outlined the differing models in use in their schools to deliver PE, the SLs were asked about the relative merits of their schools' chosen models.

The SLs' perceptions of the differing staffing models for PE

The generalist class teacher model: Issues of expertise and attitude

The well-established (if somewhat idealistic) argument in favour of generalist teachers is that they have greater knowledge of the pupils as individuals and, consequently, can tailor their teaching to their pupils' individual and collective educational and pastoral needs. Within the 36 SLs in this study, however, there was only very limited support for the use of this approach in PE. Among the few SLs whose schools favoured the generalist model the conventional justification of the benefits of teachers' familiarity with their pupils' needs was prominent:

> I think you need to know what your children can do because they might be brilliant at sport and that might be something that you can really celebrate but if you've never taught them I think that's a shame … that's why we think it's important that we do have the teachers teaching it. (SL18)

The use of PE as a vehicle for the class teacher to get to know pupils better was also offered as a justification for the generalist model:

> I don't think that we should hand over a whole curriculum area to outside agencies to deliver. Because I think it's one of the areas of the curriculum where actually you really get to know your children ... and every time they're doing it and you're not there seeing them, I think you lose part of what they are as a child really. (SL32)

While a handful of SLs (8%) commented thus in support of the traditional model of the class teacher delivering PE, the remainder (92%) did not speak in support of the generalist model. Indeed, more than half (56%) of the SLs declared substantial reservations. Most expressed doubts about classroom teachers' subject knowledge and associated confidence in PE. In this

vein, a common theme to emerge was that "the majority [of classroom teachers] here aren't that confident in teaching PE or that knowledgeable" (SL24). The limitations in generalist teachers' confidence and knowledge were seen to be important; not least because "it's quite a tough subject to be good at, if you're not very sporty. It is quite tricky" (SL1). In mitigation, the PE SLs recognised how difficult it was to acquire the kinds of practical knowledge necessary for teaching PE, especially when it is only one of several subjects in which generalist teachers have to develop sufficient expertise to teach effectively: "when you are teaching all subjects … you can't be good at everything" (SL28). Consequently, many of the SLs for PE considered it quite reasonable for generalist class teachers to shy away from teaching PE – with the concomitant increase in the use of sports coaches as well as the SLs themselves.

SLs also noted that individual class teachers' attitudes towards sport and PE could be significant: "In the time I've been here we have had teachers who aren't very passionate about PE and you know, some weeks would go by, even when they could have got out, and they don't" (SL15). One SL articulated a common perception that "Some of the teachers would rather never teach PE ever again, if they could get away with it" (SL12). Some observed that the corollary to enthusiasm for sport was typically an improvement in the quality of PE on offer: "As in any subject the teachers that really enjoyed PE taught it the best" (SL35). The importance of 'sporty' attributes and attitudes was highlighted by another SL: "It depends on the teacher, doesn't it? … we're lucky here because we have got quite a lot of sporty teachers and I've been in other schools; some of them have not got a clue about sport, you imagine what's going on there?" (SL5).

The sports coach model: Issues of expertise, willingness, flexibility and cost

Most schools relied, in part at least, on the use of coaches to teach curricular PE. When asked about their thoughts on this model, most of the SLs spoke positively of what they saw as the attributes of the coaches. Some, for example, highlighted the coaches' subject knowledge ("I think that they know their stuff and they're good" (SL12)); their personal sporting skills and proficiencies ("They're obviously very good at the sport themselves" (SL25)); their teaching and coaching abilities ("they know how to deliver it" (SL25)); and, perhaps, most significantly – given their aforementioned concerns with generalist teachers – their attitudes ("they're usually enthusiastic young people with energy and can deliver a fun activity" (SL16)).

While most SLs began by pointing out their coaches' attributes in absolute terms, some expressed their perceived value in relative terms; that is, by contrasting the coaches' abilities with those of generalist classroom teachers. Indeed, in many cases this comparison was thought to reflect well on coaches, with one SL noting that "there are more coaches coming in because obviously they're more knowledgeable and better qualified to be able to teach it [PE]" (SL8). In this vein, several SLs made a point of highlighting the positive impact of coaches on their pupils' learning: "What we found is because his skill level at coaching is so high our very young children in Year 1 are picking up those skills and learning quicker, so you can actually see progression and development" (SL10).

Not only were sports coaches seen as possessing greater sporting expertise, according to the SLs they also tended to be more flexible insofar as they could be employed to cover the particular (sporting) needs of particular schools. A number of SLs described the ways in which coaches were recruited in order to fit with the needs of the timetable: "whatever

coaches they've got we just select the ones that can cover what we want to do and we just pick from that" (SL17). A related benefit was seen as the sports coaches' impact on the amount of PE lessons that tended to be taught; in other words, their willingness or preparedness to deliver PE in conditions that classroom teachers might (and, according to the SLs, often would) not teach. The casual employment of sports coaches was viewed, therefore, as having one over-arching benefit: it ensured that PE lessons actually happened.

It was also clear that, in many of the SLs' schools, PE was the lesson that many generalist class teachers were more willing to forego for PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) time. In this regard, the employment of coaches had the added benefit of being a cheaper way of covering PPA provision: "Well, that's the other thing – PPA – you know, coaches are a lot cheaper than a supply [teacher] ... I mean you get a coach for £120 but on supply [it's] £180" (SL8). Thus, alongside their purported sporting expertise, the use of sports coaches over PE SLs could be explained on a more pragmatic level; that is to say, in terms of an economic cost-benefit analysis:

> If you were just wanting to teach PE and that was the only thing you were thinking about within school then, yes, directing specific teachers at specific subjects would be better, definitely but it's not that practical … it's whether it can be afforded or how the time works with that. (SL14)

Despite the seeming benefits of using sports coaches to deliver curricular PE, a number of SLs expressed reservations. These revolved around the relationships between coaches and pupils, the coaches' levels of qualification and experience and the coaches' influence on learning. According to the SLs, the recruitment of coaches deprived some generalist teachers of opportunities to strengthen their rapport with pupils: "it's one of those areas where you can build up a good relationship with children and have some fun" (SL20). In a similar vein, many SLs expressed concern about the difficulties of sports coaches striking up

"educationally valuable" relationships with pupils they only taught infrequently. While this was a common theme, a handful of SLs took the opposite view that a change was often beneficial, particularly for teachers,

> [who] have got that much paperwork to do and marking, and planning this that and the other, that they do seem quite relieved. The teacher will bring their class to the hall and drop them off and sometimes you do get that sigh of relief ... that 'have kid A because he's been doing my head in since nine o'clock this morning'. (SL33)

A number of SLs focused on the supposed differences between sports coaches and educators and it was a common theme that coaches were not (nor could they be viewed as) functional alternatives, let alone equivalents, to qualified teachers:

> But you know, are they educators? No, I would say they're not. If you've got a sport science degree it doesn't make you a good teacher, you know, and a good deliverer of PE education and no, I was never impressed, never impressed with it. (SL11)

This unease regarding the qualifications and training of coaches vis-à-vis teachers (whether generalist class teachers or PE SLs) was believed to manifest itself most obviously in relation to class management:

> The downside I guess is if the coaches aren't good at classroom management because they can't lead the class properly so what we want them to get out of the lesson wouldn't happen because the children can't behave. (SL17)

This was viewed as an acute issue on the frequent occasions when coaches were unable to cope with the more 'challenging' children: "they're not necessarily qualified teachers so can they deal with the child that kicks off? Not necessarily" (SL12). The concern then expressed by SLs was that this could lead to problems in the next lesson, with one noting that "what the sports coaches didn't have was the management of 30 children. So the teachers were inheriting after those sessions absolute ... well, children up the ceiling" (SL36).

The lack of training as teachers was also thought to impact on the approach that coaches took to planning and recording PE lessons – with not only a dearth of documentation but, more importantly, less obvious consideration given to the issue of planning lesson progression and challenging the pupils. One SL observed that "they [the coaches] would arrive on the day and they'd go, 'Okay, let's do this', and there was no real build-up or structure" (SL5). Another commented: "Whether there was the progression there? There wasn't specific parts of the lesson like there should be" (SL26). When considering such limitations, some SLs consistently and repeatedly compared the practice of sports coaches with that expected of qualified teachers, usually in ideal-typical terms. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the SLs viewed coaches who were also qualified as PE teachers as the most effective: "The best was when we had a PE teacher … she was a specialist in all areas of PE, not just football or games" (SL35).

The limitations of some coaches in class management and planning was thought to relate to their training; and more specifically that they had not been prepared for the classroom in the same way that teachers had. A further issue was the level of experience of the coaches, as many were frequently seen to be unduly young:

> In five years I've known two members of staff who work for these companies who are above 25, most are 23, 24 and under, right down to 18. So you've got an 18 year old teaching a year 6 class. In fact I've been in when they've had apprentices in delivering sessions who are 16 – at 16 they're still a kid themselves. (SL33)

The relatively young age of the coaches was associated with a dearth of experience leading and teaching children, particularly in the school environment: "Some of the coaches coming in would be an apprentice, with a level one BTEC in sport and they'd be taking the session and have no experience whatsoever of being in that environment" (SL23). This inexperience was seen to relate to the coaches' overall demeanour, where they were often viewed as lacking the necessary understanding of the 'professionalism' required in a school setting. In

this regard, one SL commented upon the relationship that coaches established with pupils: "sometimes, I don't know, a bit too friendly as well with the children … it was all 'high fives'" and a "bit of a kids' camp mentality" (SL26). This sentiment was echoed by another SL who had observed "just how they were walking round the school – they didn't have that overall understanding of what it means to be in the school. They were too matey, the kids were more like mates rather than pupils" (SL36). The age of the coaches and their lack of experience was, in turn, seen to be detrimental to the quality of the lesson: "So its kids in charge of kids with lots of equipment and balls and adrenaline running round the place ... it's just a disaster in my opinion" (SL23).

In addition, some coaches were said to have gained access to schools through their expertise in one (sporting) area but were then required to teach other area of the PE curriculum where they were far less qualified, if qualified at all. This tendency for coaches to teach beyond their level of qualification was believed to impact inevitably upon the quality of the lesson: "I've been in some lessons where they've got just one level two in football, but they're there teaching basketball. So it's really varied with the quality of teaching" (SL33).

According to the SLs, the PE lessons delivered by coaches not only tended to be of variable quality, but were also too narrow and restrictive in content – with an undue focus on games:

> Some of the coaches are very good, but they're not coaching what's in the National Curriculum, they're just coaching their skills for football say. So some schools aren't getting that broad balanced curriculum ... they're missing out on gym, dance, athletics and lots of other things. So they're not necessarily good. (SL7)

All of this was perceived in the first instance to be illustrative of coaches' tendency to take the easier option – just going out to play: "The children have got out of the habit of being 'taught' PE so at the start of this year they all just wanted to go out and play a game"

(SL3). In this regard, according to the SLs, many coaches appeared to view PE lessons as fundamentally about entertaining and supervising children in physical activity rather than actually teaching them. This was seen by teachers to be suitable for summer play schemes or sports camps, but inappropriate in a more formal school context.

The PE Specialist model: Issues of principle and pragmatism

The final model for the delivery of PE – reported by the 36 SLs as the least commonplace, with just over one-third (37%) of schools adopting this approach – was that of a specialist PE teacher teaching the subject to different classes across the school.

Despite the relatively infrequent use of the specialist system, and the varying ways in which it was adopted in these schools, it was still described, by the SLs at least, as the preferred model. Only a small number supported the generalist or coaching approaches, while the specialist model was clearly identified by almost all (75%) of the SLs as their favoured approach: "I think it's a fantastic model; if every school could have a specialist, even part-time specialist, I think it would work a lot better" (SL7). At the same time, however, many of the SLs were quick to acknowledge the financial costs of such an approach:

> One of our teachers at the time was a qualified PE teacher and she was asked if she would like to cover PE and she jumped at the chance. She worked three days of the week and she covered everybody's PE. But obviously she was a teacher and that was quite costly. When the new head teacher came in she had to look at budget, she had to cut budget. What she then did was what she did at her last school – they had employed a football coach who did what our teacher was doing but obviously at a reduced cost. So that was the route that she took. (SL35)

In terms of the supposed strengths and weaknesses of specialist PE teachers' teaching, as well as leading, primary PE, the first and main justification proffered by SLs related to subject knowledge and expertise. A relative dearth of subject expertise was considered by the vast majority of the SLs to be the key weakness of many generalist teachers who found the range

and content of the NCPE too challenging. This was contrasted with the key benefits of the specialist model: "a teacher who's passionate and knowledgeable about the subject" (SL4) as well as a source of support: "they can use me for ideas. They can observe me teaching and see how I take them the next step" (SL2). A final advantage of the specialist system was viewed as having one person well placed to oversee, organise and regularly teach the subject. The specialist teacher was thought to bring a more coherent approach to planning and ensure progression from one year to the next:

> Because I teach throughout the whole school and made the plan myself, I can see that it follows on so it goes from the foundation right through to year 6s and it shows overall what should be taught that year. (SL7)

All-in-all, not only did the SLs view the specialist model as resulting in better school-wide and within class organisation of PE, it also helped ensure the quality of teaching and learning in primary PE: "I know in that school they've got a teacher who teaches PE; well that's fantastic because as I say the children are going to end up having quality teaching aren't they?" (SL28)

The impact of sports coaches teaching primary PE

Of the three models described by the 36 SLs in this study – as the more prominent models for the delivery of primary curricular PE in their schools – some combination involving sports coaches was pre-eminent. As such, this discussion will focus on the pros and cons of this development, one that increasingly appears to be a transformation, rather than merely a change, in the delivery of primary PE.

On the plus side, sports coaches were deemed to possess a number of advantages. First of all, they possessed sporting expertise (albeit, often limited to particular sports, and usually football), something which very few generalist class teachers could claim. In this regard, the

SLs' perceptions often coincided with the view of Ofsted that the use of sports coaches helps pupils to acquire and develop skills – especially when the coaches worked collaboratively with teachers (Ofsted, 2009, 2013). Some of the SLs' views also chimed with studies which have suggested that coaches tended to have a positive impact on participation and engagement in PE lessons (Smith, 2013). In addition, sports coaches were viewed as willing teachers of PE. Once again, this was something very many class teachers were believed to lack. Sports coaches were also held to be flexible – prepared to teach PE come what come may, in terms of facilities, weather and so forth. Finally, the SLs acknowledged the evident appeal to their schools of sports coaches as a relatively cheap staffing option.

The perceived shortcomings of generalist class teachers in this study adds weight to a well-rehearsed view (see, for example, Elliott, Atencio, Campbell, & Jess, 2013; Harris, Cale, & Musson, 2012; Morgan & Hansen, 2008) neatly summarized by Tsangaridou (2012, p. 281) thus: "A significant number of primary school teachers have low levels of confidence, do not possess the skills and knowledge to deliver appropriate PE instruction, have limited content knowledge and do not feel competent teaching PE". All-in-all, then, the main argument for sports coaches tended to be an implicitly negative one: put starkly, sports coaches were deemed better than many primary teachers because of the inherent weaknesses among the latter.

It was clear, however, that the SLs viewed the use of sports coaches as problematic for a variety of reasons, prominent among which was the coaches' shortcomings as educationalists: they were coaches rather than teachers. The SLs regarded coaches not only as second-class educational citizens but also as a threat to the educational status of PE and the professional status of PE teachers. While acknowledging the coaches' specific subject knowledge,

personal skills and enthusiasm, they were critical of their teaching and classroom management abilities. This chimes with the wider evidence that because they possess weaker pedagogical skills (Blair & Capel, 2013; Ofsted, 2009; Smith 2013) – largely due to their lack of teaching qualifications (Blair & Capel, 2011; Pickup, 2006) – coaches tend to be profoundly limited in relation to teaching styles, behaviour management, and knowledge of both the curriculum and the children themselves (Griggs, 2008, 2010; Smith, 2013).

The fact that over half of the PE lessons delivered in the 36 schools were estimated to have involved a sports coach indicates the depth of penetration into curricular PE (quite apart from their pervasiveness in extra-curricular PE) not only of 'outsourcing' (Williams & MacDonald, 2015, p.1), in particular, but the impact of neo-liberal educational policies (Ball, 2007) on the delivery of PE (MacDonald, 2014; Wilkinson & Penney, 2014) more generally. The evidence of outsourcing in this study lends support to Powell's (2014, p.73) observation that "notions of the inexpert classroom teacher and the expert outside provider [have] converged with the discourse of 'PE as sport'."

It may be misleading to suggest that this change or transformation is tantamount to a *de-professionalization* of PE; not least because PE in primary schools has long been taught by non-specialist (often unwilling) generalist class teachers. That said, the expectation that primary teachers with a PE specialism would assume a SL role has been in place since the introduction of the NCPE. Indeed, the ostensible value of specialist PE teachers leading and teaching the subject has been endorsed by the Government's introduction (announced as part of the *PE and Sport Premium*) of a pilot course: 'Primary PE specialist initial teacher training' in 2013. Against that backdrop, the widespread normalization of the involvement of sports coaches in PE appears a counter trend to attempts to professionalize primary PE; not

least via the use of PE SLs. The effects of the Premium appear, therefore, to run counter to the policy (see, for example, National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2015) of subject specialists leading and delivering primary PE. Rather than 'upskilling' and training existing staff (either generalist teachers or PE SLs), in practice, head teachers appear more inclined to utilise the Premium to 'outsource' primary PE.

Whether or not, the growth of coaches is de-professionalizing the delivery of PE, it certainly appears to be ensuring that any ostensible educational content is diminished. Similar to the findings in the studies of Griggs (2008) and Smith (2013), the SLs made clear their view that PE delivered by sports coaches tends to be dominated by sport and by games and football in particular; not least because this tends to be the background and expertise of many of the coaches. The use of coaches appears likely, then, to exacerbate any existing tendency to turn primary PE into a pale imitation of the sport-biased curricular of secondary schools.

The leaders of primary PE

Having examined who teaches PE in primary schools, this section of the findings chapter will continue by analysing who leads the subject and what context they work in. This section will draw on the data gathered from the interviews with SLs to analyse the nature of their work in primary schools and their own background and training in PE. As such, it will examine the issues associated with initial and on-going teacher education in PE, analyse how teachers progress to become SLs and also explore the particular demands that are associated with the role in primary schools.

The training of SLs

Of the SLs that were included in the sample, almost all (92%) were qualified teachers who had experienced ITE as part of their higher education. Over two thirds (67%) of those SLs with qualified teacher status (QTS) had completed their ITE with an element of specialist training in PE. This was demonstrated by one SL who stated that he; "...went to College and did a B.Ed. with primary PE, so yeah I had a PE background" (SL9). A third (33%) of SLs with QTS were trained as generalists or as generalists with a specialism in another area of the curriculum: "…no it was art and QTS, but I've always played sport, been interested in sport and done coaching qualifications…but yeah, no formal PE qualification if you like" (SL14). Finally in a handful of settings (8%) the subject was led by a Teaching Assistant who did not have QTS: "…well as I say I'm a HLTA so my sport has come from CPD, watching other PE teachers work, visits to other schools, work with the head teacher on planning and things like that" (SL3).

When asked about their experience of ITE around two thirds (62%) of SLs referred to an extensive, worthwhile and enjoyable programme that developed their knowledge and confidence in teaching PE. One stated how well suited s/he was to the training; "I had a great course, I did a BA in Education with PE which was a fairly new course at the time, but it was absolutely brilliant and right up my street" (SL2). Another recognised how important one of the educators had been, noting that;

> It was a very good university, they were really, really good with the teaching and sort of supporting us and progressing us really. We were very lucky to have a very good PE teacher that taught the PE side of it at university so it was quality all the way through really. (SL27)

Finally, another SL similarly valued the programme that s/he had experienced, particularly noting the range and depth of areas that were covered. S/he stated that s/he "was a PE Specialist" (SL12) and that;

> ...it was fantastic at University, brilliant, loved it. Excellent teaching, qualifications in, you know, teaching netball, hockey, swimming; just all the different sports and we used to do it ourselves, we used to do the theory behind it, we did all the sports science as well with it. I felt that we covered loads. (SL12)

While this is seemingly a very positive picture of ITE, the SLs who valued their PE training were invariably the ones who had specialised in this area and had had extended provision around the subject. In contrast, many of those teachers who had not trained as specialists were more critical of their PE provision and viewed it as being limited or inadequate. One noted that;

> There was barely any; if you weren't into sport then it would have just been, well not a waste of time obviously but it was something like 16 hours within a four-year course. I still use some of the things that we did in those sessions but you know there was nowhere near enough. (SL14)

The lack of adequate time for PE was a reoccurring theme; "I think we had about two hours training. I can hardly remember anything" (SL5), while another SL linked this issue to wider demands of specialist training; "It wasn't a lot…from what I can remember, so you know, when you bear in mind it is such a specialist area it wasn't given specialist provision, not at university, not at all" (SL11).

In summary, over two thirds of the 36 SLs in the present study had completed their training with an element of specialist PE provision. This finding contradicted the 2013 Ofsted report which stated that most PE SLs were non-specialists. There was also a very clear relationship in the present study between the views of SLs on their ITE in PE and the type of training that

they had received. Those who valued their PE provision were invariably those who had been trained as specialists, while many of those who considered it to be insufficient or limited were the ones who had trained as generalists.

The limited and declining time allocated to PE during the ITE of generalist primary teachers is indicative of its status (Smith, 2013), with the prioritization of core subject training at the end of the 1990s exacerbating this trend (Griggs, 2010). In 1996 for example, Carney and Armstrong (1996) found that ITE courses provided on average 33 hours of PE specific training; a decade later Talbot (2007) estimated that for almost half of newly qualified primary teachers this PE provision had fallen to six hours or less. Thus, the experiences of those SLs who had trained as generalists, typified the findings of a number of studies over the last 20 years which highlight the shortcomings of PE provision within ITE (Blair & Capel, 2011; Caldecott, Warburton & Waring, 2006; Elliot et al, 2013; Fletcher & Casey, 2014; Griggs, 2010; Harris, Cale, & Musson, 2012; Ward, 2012). It was thought that the limited and declining time allocation meant that most generalist teachers are given only a 'basic starting point' (Elliot et al, 2013, p.750) and that many enter the profession lacking the confidence and specialist knowledge needed to teach PE effectively (Blair & Capel, 2011).

Given the well documented concerns around the paucity of teacher training in primary PE, SLs were asked where they had learnt most about teaching the subject. The most common response, from over a third (39%) of SLs, was that their best learning experiences had come through actually teaching the subject in school. Most SLs believed that this experience had the greatest impact on their development as primary PE teachers. One SL stated that s/he learnt through; "Experience, it has to be. It's being allowed to experiment, being allowed to do things the way you feel are right" (SL11). While another stated that; "You learn on the job

don't you? You learn from teaching, teaching PE, seeing how it goes and analysing how you're getting on from that really rather than somebody telling you how you should be doing it" (SL15). Finally one other SL was more specific in identifying which part of their teaching experience allowed them to develop the most; "I would say the majority of what I learnt, I learnt when I actually qualified because you can observe but that's not the same as actually doing it for yourself so I would say that I learnt most of mine on my first NQT [Newly Qualified Teacher] placement" (SL18).

The next most cited response, from a fifth (20%) of SLs, was that they had learnt most about PE through the observation of other primary PE teachers; "I think that was the best way to learn; go and watch a lesson" (SL12). The value of being able to learn from watching others was explained by one SL:

> I think that ability to watch other people, that option to go to other schools...if I had a spare morning just getting on the phone to people who I know...and just going and looking at their planning, seeing what they did and then just watching them teach a couple of lessons and that for me was by far the best. (SL3)

A smaller number (16%) of SLs cited their own schooling as being their most influential learning experience in relation to teaching PE. One stated that it was "from my time as a child in PE and then growing up with sport, that's definitely a big influence for me" (SL14). For these SLs, they had developed most understanding of how to teach the subject from their own experiences of being taught themselves;

> I think most of my PE comes from my experience at school because at secondary school my life was PE… I'd never come home before five o'clock; I'd rather be doing badminton or volleyball or hockey or netball and my teacher was fantastic and I learnt loads from her. (SL10)

A similarly small number (16%) of SLs cited CPD as the most important part of their learning. CPD, in a PE context often takes the form of coaching courses and was seen to be an on-going feature of most SLs' experiences in school. One stated that; "I think all of the courses that you go on, you pick up something here and there…. You know I find quirky things the children love...and as I say you've got to keep on the ball with the courses" (SL13). In a not dissimilar way, another SL stated how s/he valued the opportunity of picking up new ideas from others during CPD; "I think you just learn more and more every year when you go on courses and get a few new things" (SL7).

Finally, the least common response, from a handful (9%) of SLs, was that they had learnt most about teaching PE from their own ITE. One SL for example noted that s/he learnt most "...at university, yeah because not only did you work with the tutors that were there, we also went into schools as part of our practice and we had to teach a certain amount of lessons just while we were trainees as part of PE" (SL17).

Given the paucity of teacher training it is perhaps not surprising that SLs highlighted the value of other learning experiences, as being more beneficial to their teaching of PE than the more formal professional training provided by CPD or ITE. This may, in the case of CPD, reflect the homogenous nature of training (Casey, 2012), the limited opportunities for such training in PE (Blair & Capel, 2011, 2013; Harris, Cale, & Musson, 2012), and in turn the status of the subject (Smith, 2013), but nonetheless more formal provision was not as valued by SLs. Their preference instead was for more informal experiences, where they learnt 'on the job' by teaching and observing the practice of other professionals within the context of their school network – as this experience was seen to be more resonant and authentic (Green, 2003). While learning within the school context was their preferred approach, they also

recognised the influence of early experiences, where they were influenced by interactions with others from childhood onwards. Not only did this influence their attitudes and values towards PE, but it also informed their own approach to teaching as they often replicated the methods that they themselves experienced when being taught or coached in PE lessons and sports clubs.

The responses of the SLs reflects Elias' concept of habitus, where an individual's beliefs and actions can be explained as engrained and automatic responses that have been socially constructed through interactions with others (Van Krieken, 1998). Our habitus is primarily thought to be shaped by our early experiences, but is also constructed by our involvement in increasingly complex figurations (Green, 2003). As such, habituses can and often do develop later in life, when change is caused by the significance and sheer duration of experiences. For SLs, observing the practice of other respected (and more powerful) teachers within their school figurations over a sustained period of time is more likely to influence their beliefs and behaviour, than the more fleeting experiences of ITE or CPD. The more informal experiences of being taught and coached themselves as children, and of being part of a school network as teachers, were found to have more impact on SLs than the formal learning offered through ITE and CPD (Martin, McCaughtry, Hodges-Kulinna & Cothran, 2008).

One final point is that of the varied opportunities for learning, actually teaching the subject in school was thought for most SLs to be the experience that had the greatest impact on their development as primary PE teachers. This finding goes some way to supporting the view expressed by Keay and Spence (2012), that the greater use of sports coaches in schools will deprive generalists of the experience of leading PE lessons and ultimately see them lose their skills (such as they are) in teaching the subject.

The appointment of SLs

When asked how they became the SL for PE, over two thirds (69%) stated that they wanted to do so and that they put themselves forward for the role. Around a third (31%), however, noted that the position was filled out of necessity with the SL being persuaded to take on the responsibility, often against their own wishes.

Where the SL had volunteered for the role two main factors were evident. The first was the level of qualification that they had achieved, with over two thirds (67%) of those with QTS having had additional specialist training in the teaching of PE as part of their ITE. One SL explained that they; "look at your qualifications, don't they?" (SL12) while another similarly noted that they; "look at the skills that people have got and share them out" (SL14). The fact that most SLs were trained as specialists and, as such, had a higher level of qualification in PE than other members of staff, was an obvious factor in their appointment; "They just thought it would be better to have a specialist in PE. They just gave me the job really because I'm enthusiastic and I've got all the skills to teach all across the Key Stages" (SL23).

The second factor in the appointment of SLs who had volunteered for the role was their attitude and willingness to lead PE; "I've always wanted to; in every school I've been to" (SL10). It was clear that they had a genuine interest and concern for learning in the subject, with one noting that; "It's something I'm personally passionate about; it's just something I loved in school so much and it's kind of carried on" (SL4). Around half (44%) of the SLs considered this, their own enthusiasm for, and interest in, PE and sport, to be the primary factor in their appointment: "I just liked sport, because I loved sport so much I said, 'Oh yeah I'll do the sport,' when I first started teaching…" (SL5).

It was clear that there are two main factors that influence the appointment of SLs; their level of qualification as subject specialists and their attitude towards PE and sport. The latter, their attitude towards or enthusiasm for PE, emerged as a dominant characteristic of the SLs included in the research; with over four fifths (87%) describing themselves as 'sporty' or as having a 'love of sport'. One SL exemplified these feelings, stating that "...it's just like a passion that I've always had; I've been a sporty person all my life" (SL13).

While two thirds of SLs had pushed themselves towards their role within PE, the other third were more reluctant. In these schools the SL may have still have considered themselves to be 'sporty', but they were not as enthusiastic about their role. In these situations the teachers had been persuaded to take on the responsibility even if in some cases they only had limited interest and skills in PE. This was illustrated by one SL who said "Honestly? I did a bit of running so therefore you can do the PE Coordinator…that's the truth. That's how it happened" (SL18). Despite having only tenuous links to the subject, through some interest in physical activity, these SLs were still seen as having more expertise in PE than any other teachers. Thus, they were regarded as the most suitable member of staff to lead the subject: "The lady who was the PE Coordinator left, and at the time I was most sporty member of staff so therefore it kind of came to me by default" (SL18).

In one setting, no one was thought to have any interest in PE and the role was allocated in an arbitrary manner based on who was yet to assume an additional responsibility for a subject. This was said to be because; "...in primary school it's whatever is free, who's left... 'we've got no PE Coordinator at the moment, you're it'." (SL5). Finally, in one other school the expectation around who had expertise in PE and was the best suited to lead the subject was felt by the SL to have been decided by gender. He said "I'm the male teacher… Which is a

bit sexist I know but that's the way it goes, isn't it? No but I think with the limited number of men in primary I think there is a larger percentage of them who will be sports specialists" (SL16).

The problem, found in a third of the schools, of having to allocate the SL role while not having an obvious and willing candidate, meant that there was some reluctance in those teachers who had been asked to take on the responsibility. In an attempt to avoid this situation, 3 of the 36 schools appointed of a non-qualified teacher, a teaching assistant, as the SL for PE instead.

This approach was thought in the first instance to be a more efficient model as it would alleviate the time demands made on teachers and allow them to devote more attention to other responsibilities within the school. One teaching assistant noted how the challenge of leading PE in addition to other teaching responsibilities led to them being given the SL role:

> ...because all the teachers obviously are so busy that...the SSCos were phoning up our school and saying, 'Can you come to this competition?' and the PE Coordinator at the time was a teacher and she was like, 'Oh I can't really, I've got a meeting tonight, I've got marking to do, I've got planning to do,' and I was like, 'Well I'll go, I'll take them' and it kind of started like that so I kind of fell into it really… (SL13)

According to the SLs a further advantage of having a teaching assistant take on subject leadership is that they have more flexibility in their role and are not restricted by their teaching commitments in the same way as a class teacher. The willingness of a school to release a teaching assistant to attend a tournament during the school day, rather than have a whole class being disrupted by the absence of their teacher, was explained by one SL: "...normally it's a teacher that overshadows but because they didn't have time to do all these extra-curricular competitions; and then sometimes the competitions were on a Thursday

afternoon; well no teachers allowed to be freed up whereas I could be freed up to go to that" (SL13).

While the employment of teaching assistants as SLs provides some advantages in relation to time and flexibility, there are implications for the subject of not having a qualified teacher in the role. These issues are mainly centred on the status of the teaching assistant and the perception that they don't have the authority to monitor the teaching and planning of fully qualified teachers. One teaching assistant noted that s/he; "...did an overview of what was expected of your planning in PE and then I would collect it in termly and like maintain it. I kind of did it alongside the head, just…because I feel sometimes, who am I to comment on a teacher's planning?" (SL4). In a similar way, the same teaching assistant noted that s/he needed to work with a senior teacher if s/he was to observe and comment upon the teaching of other staff; "I couldn't really imagine going to watch someone's lesson, I'd have to do it kind of shadowed I think with the head or something at first because it's just again having confidence to comment on their lesson I think" (SL4).

The expectation for primary teachers to assume a subject leadership role, after completing their first year of teaching (often referred to as the Newly Qualified Teacher or NQT year), has been in place since the introduction of the national curriculum and is seen as a standard part of primary teachers' duties. When considering all of the schools in the sample it is apparent that teachers were typically recruited to lead the subject based initially on their enthusiasm and willingness to do so, but also on their particular qualifications, skills and experiences in PE. By and large the SLs were trained PE specialists who appeared to possess a genuine interest and enthusiasm for PE and sport.

In a few settings, however, SLs were not as willing to take on the role and had been given the responsibility based on at times quite tenuous assumptions relating to their level of 'sportiness'. In these circumstances, as highlighted by Ward (2013), it was clear that PE was 'left over' and that no one else wanted to lead the subject. This reluctance reflected the local status of PE; a low standing that was amplified by the realisation that these SLs lacked the skills to teach PE themselves, let alone lead and promote 'good practice' amongst others. Moreover, this situation was seemingly accepted and seen as commonplace within primary education, being redolent of what Jess, Keay and Carse (2014, p.12) called the 'long-marginalised status of primary PE' where some head teachers and school leaders regard PE to be less important (Griggs, 2012a). The reluctance of staff to accept the SL role in PE and the willingness of the head teacher to appoint someone to this role with little or no relevant expertise is further evidence of the marginal status of PE in education in general and in the culture of individual primary schools in particular.

In a very small number of schools, the acceptance of non-specialists leading PE was taken a step further with the responsibility being given to a teaching assistant. The arrangement, of having a non-qualified teacher lead PE, was unconventional as teaching assistants typically work closely with teachers to support children's learning in primary schools rather than teach lessons or lead subjects themselves. Teaching assistants are expected to supervise small groups or provide additional support for individual children, but they do not have the same level of qualification, responsibility or authority as teachers. As such, the teaching assistants who had been appointed as SLs recognised the difficulty they had in overcoming their relatively limited power within the school figuration. Elias conceived power as being a feature of all relationships between individuals and groups (Van Krieken, 1998) with the balance of power, in this example, favouring those who had qualified teacher status. The lack

of power restrained teaching assistants as they were perceived to lack the expertise and authority to monitor the teaching and planning of fully qualified teachers and, as such, were compromised in their ability to lead the subject effectively. This would seem to be an example (albeit a relatively isolated one) of the de-professionalization of primary PE, in that the 'expertise and probity' (Gabe, Bury, & Elston, 2004) expected of a SL was being eroded.

Having considered the training and appointment of SLs, this section will conclude with an analysis of what a PE SL's role actually entails in primary schools.

The role of SLs

When asked to outline the responsibilities that come with the position over two thirds (69%) of the SLs noted the demands relating to attending tournaments and extracurricular competitions. These issues revolved around organising teams, transport, kit, permission slips and communicating with parents; and the more committed they (and the other staff at the school) were to attending all competitions, the more overwhelming these demands became. One SL captured the extent of these challenges stating that:

> All my time, a lot of my time now is taken up with organising competitions. There's stuff every week and all my time as well; last week rounder's till quarter to seven at night, the tennis till six o'clock. It's making sure you've got it in the diary, it's looking for the children that are good enough to be in the competition, then it's writing the paper; it's all the paperwork. It's getting the CRB checks, it's getting the, you know, the risk assessment; oh my God, it's just unbelievable everything that goes into it and then if its cancelled or whatever; telling parents, it's all the communication. I know, sometimes it's like, oh gosh, they've got a competition on Monday, why didn't they give us enough...no! It's because there's so much going on. The week before that I had the swimming festival, athletics went on till quarter to nine at night you know, and it's getting twenty kids there and making sure that they've all got the right kit; I take kit home and wash it. It's just…my PE takes up nearly all my time and I was thinking last night, I don't know whether I can sustain this. (SL5)

While not seen to be as onerous, around half (47%) of the SLs also noted the demands relating to monitoring the subject in school. This in the main related to the monitoring paperwork and was seen to be; "a case of making sure the planning's up to speed really…as a coordinator you're getting a bit of a flavour of what's going on in your subject" (SL1). While monitoring was typically thought of in relation to documentation and planning, there was also reference by some SLs to; "monitoring the lessons taught by other members of staff and supporting them in terms of ideas" (SL16). The final aspect of this checking process, which emerged in a few instances, was "...keeping my eye on the timetable, making sure that people are doing a couple of times a week" (SL6).

Alongside the demands associated with attending competitions and monitoring the subject, other responsibilities also emerged. These were noted less frequently but covered a range of tasks such as managing people, events and equipment in school. SLs were expected to organise resources, to "order and get the equipment sorted" (SL5) and to also coordinate PE related events in school "...we've got a dance workshop in a couple of months so it's just liaising with them and then I coordinate things like sports day and going swimming; it does take up quite a lot of my time" (SL18). SLs were also expected to manage the involvement of coaches, be that in curriculum time or for sports clubs beyond the school day. One explained that;

> I do all the after school clubs and the morning clubs so I've got to meet with coaches and say when do you want to do this and how much are you going to charge, what letter are you sending out for it…that's all the paperwork for that as well. (SL5)

The paperwork surrounding the role was also a consistent theme and was seen in two other areas. Firstly in applying for and disseminating information from CPD courses; "...it's how the knowledge gets shared between people. I've been on quite a lot of training and it's how

you feed that back to everybody, to filter ideas down and share resources" (SL14). Finally there was also a level of bureaucracy around health and safety and safeguarding procedures with one SL explaining that "...its every single risk assessment that you do prior to the event, its checking the consent and double checking the transport for the event and then making sure that's all documented so that whoever does attend knows who's going home with who" (SL28).

SLs, be they specialists, generalists or even non-qualified TAs, are expected to take responsibility for the PE curriculum, as they monitor and support lesson planning, and observe and provide feedback on teaching. This is similar to the demands of leading other foundation subjects and is seen as a standard part of primary teachers' duties. In addition, however, SLs of PE also assume responsibility for leading extracurricular school sport. Since the mid-1990s the government has become increasingly involved in this aspect of school life, with varying policy initiatives such as SSPs, SSCos, Activemark, and the School Games all aiming to enhance children's participation in extracurricular sport (Smith, 2013). One unintended outcome of this development is that extracurricular sport has become relatively more important within PE, with SLs recognising that catering for the school sport was by far the most demanding aspect of their role. In the first instance it included the additional, and not inconsiderable, time commitment of regularly attending tournaments and competitions; secondly it also included the organisation of the other associated but 'unseen' aspects such as; selecting teams, arranging transport, organising equipment, washing team kit, writing and sending permission slips, on-going communication with parents and ensuring that health and safety and safeguarding procedures are followed. Overall the most prominent responsibilities of SLs were those associated with attending extracurricular competitions and, as such, it was school sport rather than curricular PE which demanded most attention. In this study, the

impact of government initiatives which repeatedly promoted the sport discourse (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2015) are seen in the disproportionate amount of time and effort given by SLs to extracurricular school sport. This development has reinforced the relative importance of extracurricular sport and the conception that PE is fundamentally about 'doing sport'. Indeed the response of the PE SLs would suggest that curricular time PE seemingly occupies a secondary position that was based on facilitating and reproducing the culture of sport in schools (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012; Ward & Quennerstedt, 2015).

Finally, while the responsibilities associated with leading PE were shown to be varied, wide-ranging and different in their nature to those associated with leading other subjects. It was noted however; that none of the SLs spoke in any way about 'decision-making' as being part of their role. This omission would seemingly indicate that, despite the value given to their role in organising extracurricular sport, SLs actually had relatively limited power chances and were not well positioned to affect change. Given the hierarchical structure of schools, the head teachers in contrast, monopolised power and were thought by SLs to play a key role in deciding the future direction of the subject and in enabling change (Rainer et al, 2012, Smith 2006).

Conclusion

Sociologists tend to talk in terms of change and transformation (Roberts, 2012). Change will have occurred if the delivery of primary PE differs in some way or other from the way it was. It will be more appropriate, however, to talk of transformation in primary PE if the shift towards outsourcing PE to commercial sports coaches becomes commonplace and well-established. The relations between intentional human action and its unplanned effects are inevitably opaque (Elias, 1994): only time will tell whether the changes afoot amount to the

kinds of transformation in the teaching of PE in primary schools that SLs have begun to identify in this study. There remains, it must be said, a good deal of continuity in the delivery of primary PE. It is apparent, nevertheless, that, amidst the evident lengthening chains of interdependency within PE networks, the portents of a future with sports coaches as the main deliverers of primary school *sport*, rather than simply PE – with SLs relegated to an administrative role – are there for all to see. One thing appears clear, however: the traditional pattern of PE being taught by a generalist classroom teacher may well become a thing of the past in primary schools in England.

Chapter Seven

The nature of primary PE lessons: Planning, teaching, assessment

This chapter will analyse the practice of SLs in planning, assessing and teaching PE lessons. It will examine how they plan for PE, how they assess and monitor pupil progress and also how they actually teach the subject. With all three of the aspects the aim will be to describe and explain how PE lessons are taught in primary schools and to examine the various constraints which act on this pedagogical process.

The planning of primary PE

Three quarters (76%) of the 36 schools in the sample had some whole school planning in place for PE. Planning is conventionally understood as being at three levels: a long term plan is an overview of curriculum content across a Key Stage, a medium term plan is a more detailed document that maps teaching across a half term or a unit of work; while finally a short term plan provides comprehensive information around the learning activities that might feature within one lesson. In the 36 schools within the sample, central planning was often available in the medium or long term. In some instances this was referred to in more general terms; "There's kind of an overall, kind of a long or annual plan of what we do each year and what should be covered by each year group" (SL9). While in others it was evident that a more detailed and comprehensive approach had been adopted; "We plan a medium term plan for everything, so there's a general flow of activities that are going to happen" (SL14). Very little reference was made by SLs to Ofsted when discussing planning and in this regard it was seemingly an accepted part of the school approach rather than being a consequence of external requirements.

Where whole school planning was in place, around two thirds (64%) of what was referred to, was largely based on externally bought documents; which has been written and published as a commercial venture. One SL explained that "we use commercial lesson plans a lot of the time" (SL6) while another similarly stated that "yeah we go with the Val Sabin scheme so that's, that's your sort of basis" (SL21).

In contrast, over a third (36%) of the schools that had planning, had developed this internally through additional work undertaken by the SL. In this instance they had typically used the NCPE guidance and other external sources along with their own personal expertise to write the school documentation. This planning was thought to have been a significant amount of work: "I know Helen put a lot of effort into writing a lot of plans linked to the QCA..." (SL30) and was in this case seen to be; "...really detailed, to try and support them [other teachers]" (SL30). The level of detail was also evident in another SL's description of their own work: "...as part of the scheme of work I did for the infants, I said per year group what I wanted them to cover in the year and then underneath each section I would then put a list of resources; and where you can get activities for that from" (SL12).

In the schools where whole school planning was available, three clear themes were expressed by SLs. The first was that the planning was seen as being a guidance document to be used in a flexible rather than a prescriptive manner. One SL explained that; "There is flexibility within it and you don't have to do in the exact way. You know as long as it's being taught and delivered its fine" (SL31). Another similarly stated that; "There's no set guidelines on, 'you need to teach this, this, and in this way'; there's nothing like that. You just have, 'you've got to teach this, do it how you like'." (SL1).

While there is flexibility in the exact way that the content is taught, the second theme to emerge is that the planning is to be followed in broader terms to ensure that there is some coherence in the intended progressions of pupil learning. This was illustrated by one SL who stated that; "We're happy to let them go with their lessons but there is a scheme in place to follow as well, to make sure we're covering what we need to" (SL2). In this regard the planning documents are in place to structure children's learning experiences: "We've got an overall plan for the whole school...it follows on so it goes from the foundation right through to year 6's" (SL7). The expectation here is for teachers to follow the overall structure, but to; "...adapt those unit plans to suit the needs of their own teaching and learning in their classrooms" (SL21).

The third and main theme to emerge was that the planning was in place to provide support. It was designed to provide ideas and structure for those teachers that may want it. Some teachers who were new to the profession and inexperienced in PE were seen to need most support: "… for a new young teacher there is a scheme of work that will give you warm-ups, it will give you ideas to do, you know because obviously, if you're not a sporty sort of person… you've never done PE before, you do need help" (SL13). Similarly, those teachers who lacked time or confidence in the subject were also thought to value this support: "...we use the LCP one, so most people who probably haven't got the time to plan a session themselves or perhaps not the confidence will just come, look up what they're doing here so it's all broken down" (SL3).

Whether the teacher involved was young, inexperienced or lacking in confidence, the support of detailed planning was thought to be valued: "...it makes everybody's life easier; if you've got good planning, everybody's life is easier" (SL1). Another SL echoed this view and linked

the quality of planning to the quality of pupil learning; “It does make it easier if you’ve got structured plans. If you’re trying to go out there and do an ad-hoc lesson and you’re not really confident in it it’s not going to be very good anyway, so it is a lot down to the planning really” (SL1).

Over three quarters of the SLs in the sample had put some type of whole school planning in place for PE. The nature of this documentation varied, but typically took the form of medium or long term plans that were designed to provide ideas around the content of learning activities as well as a structure for progression between lessons over a longer period of time. The approach adopted by SLs in relation to planning reflected the norms of the school figuration, in that their behaviour was an expression of the expectations of the workplace. Elias’ concept of networks incorporates the idea of interdependence, and within the figuration of a primary school the expectation for planning to be in place was based on the aim of providing support for colleagues. In this way the school figuration generated reciprocal and mutually beneficial orientations and behaviours, as shared planning was seen to be helpful for all staff in alleviating some of the pressures associated with preparing for lessons. This level of support was emphasised in relation to the needs of young and inexperienced teachers, but also for those who possibly lacked some confidence in teaching the subject. In most schools, the interdependent nature of the staff meant that SLs were expected to contribute towards the preparation of lessons and, in doing so, provide assistance for other ‘mutually orientated and dependent people’ (Elias, 1978, p.261).

There was also shared understanding around the use of the planning by colleagues. There was no expectation for it to be followed in a regimented or prescriptive manner, rather it was emphasised that it could be used in a flexible way to meet the particular needs of the teacher

and the individual children in their class. In this regard SLs attitudes towards the use of planning seemingly also reflected the norms of their immediate setting, and those of the broader network of primary teachers. The expectations of SLs with regards to the behaviour of their colleagues reflected the culture of the workplace, where the habitus of teachers, their beliefs and actions in relation to planning, were shaped by social interactions with others within the school figuration.

The assessment of primary PE

The means of assessing pupil progress is in a state of transition. The national curriculum for 2014 has encouraged schools to develop their own approaches to assessment and move away from the use of levels. But schools also have the freedom to choose their own approach and, as such, many are persisting with versions of level descriptors, because of the work that has already been done to develop this system.

When asked how pupils were assessed in PE, over a quarter (29%) of SLs made reference to the structured approach that has been developed around the old national curriculum. These schools either used level descriptors on their own, or in conjunction with the core tasks, to assess and track pupils' progress. One SL described quite a formal and structured process of summative assessment:

> I want them to level them in games, gym, dance, swimming if it's relevant, athletics and then an overall level… I've given them the core tasks so that they know that what they're teaching is around the right level and I recommend that they use the core tasks as well for assessment, you know, so if they set up one of these core tasks they can use that for an assessment piece of work. (SL12)

In another school the SL outlined how assessment was integrated into the timetable in a similarly systematic way. S/he said; "we report a National Curriculum level each half term so

teachers are all familiar with level descriptors" (SL14). S/he then elaborated on how this process worked:

> We start from the planning; our objectives are broken down into 'I can' statements so when you're planning you're picking which of those statements you're covering; so you're planning to a level. So when you're coming back to report a level you can see what has been covered and you know who's excelled or who's not met that objective because that would be on the evaluation of the lesson. (SL14)

Finally, in another setting a more simple system was in place, but again was still linked to the requirements of the old national curriculum. The SL noted that:

> ...we have moving on sheets which is a sort of a quite easy assessment tool where you might write down what you're trying to do. I'd pull that straight from the level descriptors and then what you do is, you've got three boxes; not achieved, achieved or above, so you literally would just pop their initials in there and it just gives you an overview…(SL1)

The system around assessment at a national level is still developing, but these few SLs were able to talk with confidence about the process. Most importantly, they had a well-established method in place that helped them to develop a secure understanding of pupils' progress and attainment.

In contrast to this systematic approach, over a fifth of SLs (21%) described assessment as a more informal and impressionistic process although there was little real evidence to show where it happened as part of their teaching. That is to say that their summative grades were based on what they remembered of the children's attainment rather than on a more formal process that included regularly assessments and recording of progress. One SL described their reports as having a; "three star system; one star for below the national average, two stars is where they should be and three stars is attaining above the national average" (SL3). The school's approach was then based on; "professional judgment; you look at what the children

have done over the year and you decide which one of those they fit into...and that basically is it at the moment" (SL3). Another SL also described how their knowledge of the pupils was the key; s/he said:

> You get the whole feel for it, don't you? I know my sporty ones, I know the ones that need to improve, I know the ones that are flat-footed and really, I don't write much down at all because I haven't got time. I just don't have time to do it. (SL25)

Finally, the most common response when asked about assessment, was for half (50%) of the SLs to concede that here wasn't any formal approach to summative assessment in PE in their school. One SL stated that; "we don't really assess PE... we don't do anything" (SL22), another similarly stated that; "I know I don't do enough of it" (SL5) while a third also commented that; "I wouldn't say there's a structure in place at the moment, not here anyway" (SL15).

It was also noted that assessment in PE was not as detailed or regulated as with the core subjects. One SL noted that; "I kind of feel like its bottom of the pile as well; you've got your literacy, your maths and your science; I kind of think PE assessment is one of those that's not done in that much detail" (SL9). While another SL made a similar comparison:

> ...in terms of reporting it at the end of the year, on our reports there's a box about PE and you will comment on children's ability but I wouldn't say here there's a set, you know, they're a level 'whatever' like there would be in maths or other subjects. (SL15)

In discussing the issues around assessment SLs commented initially that this was a complicated area; "It's really tricky" (SL9), "The assessment is really difficult" (SL26) and that as part of this time pressures were a factor; "I don't know how to do it effectively and quickly" (SL5). Some elaborated on these problems and noted how the majority of teachers found it difficult to interpret and understand the assessment criteria; "I think most people

would struggle to say what level their children are in PE" (SL3). This was explained in part by the nature of the subject as being "so much more specialist" (SL2), which again raised concerns as to the usefulness of subject training in ITE.

The SLs by their very nature do tend to have specialist subject knowledge, but a number still highlighted assessment as being an area to develop. One stated that it; "is something that we're going to look at over the next couple of years" (SL3), while another commented that; "Assessment is an area we really need to look into a bit more because there's no real assessment recording as such" (SL2). Finally one SL expressed again how assessment was a target, and recognised that it was a persistent issue: "The assessment is always difficult and I always put it as part of my appraisal thing every year, I need to sort out assessments more but it's so difficult" (SL35).

While planning was claimed by SLs to be in place in most schools, the majority of SLs also admitted that there was no consistent or structured use of assessment in PE lessons. The findings from the data, generally confirmed the failings that have long been identified in primary PE, namely that assessment has been a persistent area of concern (Griggs, 2007; Jess et al., 2006; Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012; Ofsted, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013; Tsangaridou, 2012). The SLs recognised that assessment in PE was a time consuming and difficult task and that many teachers lacked the confidence and specialist knowledge to do so effectively. This deficiency was linked by Harris, Cale and Muson (2012) and Elliot et al (2013), among others, to the limited specialist provision for PE within ITE and similar limitations in the availability of appropriate CPD. These factors impact on teacher confidence and understanding and ultimately are thought to explain why classroom teachers find it

challenging to teach and assess primary PE (Morgan & Bourke 2005, 2008; Morgan & Hansen 2008; Armour 2010; Ward, 2012).

This view, while undoubtedly a major factor, is seemingly contested by the admission from some SLs that they themselves, as specialists, also found it difficult to put an effective system in place. In these cases the issue was not one of training or understanding, more that assessment in PE remained a time-consuming and uniquely difficult task; even for more established specialist teachers. In other subjects teachers are able to review children's written class or homework, and use this along with more formal assessment (test) data to build a detailed picture of the pupil's ability. In PE the transient nature of performance makes it difficult to capture, record and review what has been learnt for each pupil. This particular difficulty makes it harder to assess in PE and is a barrier for even the more confident and experienced specialist teachers.

The NCPE has and does provide guidance on what and how to assess in primary PE. However, this aspect of government policy has not been repeated in the manner intended in the day-to-day practices of generalist classroom teachers or PE SLs. The unique difficulties associated with assessment in PE means that the policy has not been enacted as intended but has been subject to 'slippage' (Penney & Evans, 2005). The complexity of the policy process inevitably leads to elements of change or 'slippage' and in this instance the difficulties associated with assessment have prompted most of the SLs to largely reject, or interpret differently, the guidance provided by the NCPE around the use of levels and core tasks in PE. The process by which policy comes to be acted out in practice is by its nature erratic and subject to the varying priorities and power of the individuals and groups that are involved. In this case the, the power exerted by teachers within the complex 'policy' network means they

are able, to some degree, to manipulate and control the extent to which they conform to the expectations of the NCPE. Power was thought by Elias (1978) to be a relative rather than absolute, and in this regard while teachers may have had comparatively limited power, it was still sufficient to influence the policy process.

Moreover, while this impasse may be challenged by the wider 'PE profession', it is seemingly accepted within the immediate figuration of the primary school. As with planning, the practice of assessment in PE is influenced by its value within the primary school network to other teachers and by the status of the subject as a whole. The detailed assessment processes outlined in the NCPE are seen by PE SLs as being time consuming and difficult, but also less useful for their colleagues. This perception shapes the habitus of SLs and leads to a position where assessment in PE is accepted as being an aspect of pedagogy that is often overlooked in practice.

Planning and assessment in PE are similar in that both are more administrative aspects that impact on teaching and learning within the subject. It would seem that accepted practice in relation to both is influenced, to a greater or lesser extent, by the immediate impact of the school network or figuration of which teachers are a part. The mutual dependency of teachers makes it more likely for planning to be in place as this resource is valued for the support it provides for colleagues – who are often faced with teaching PE when ill prepared to do so. In contrast, while assessment may be recognised as being an aspect of 'good practice', it is difficult in its nature and cannot support or alleviate the work of other teachers in the same way. In short, the same necessity does not surround assessment within the school network, as unlike detailed planning, it is not needed by colleagues to teach the subject. Thus, there is higher expectation around the sharing of planning and more likelihood that it is in place.

The teaching of primary PE

When asked to describe a typical PE lesson, over two thirds (68%) of SLs chose to discuss the content of a games lesson; demonstrating again that this would seem to be the area of the PE curriculum where the majority felt most comfortable. When outlining the content and approaches used within lessons a few common features emerged, with half (50%) noting that a typical lesson would start with a warm up. This aspect was referred to in two ways; as a physical exercise and as an opportunity to develop understanding. As such, one SL described the warm up as the part of the lesson where children would have a; "run around the yard, then we might do some exercises and some stretches, just for about 5-10 minutes" (SL1); while another referred to it as an opportunity to develop understanding about; "why it's important to warm up and stretch, and be able to talk about what's happening to your body while you're exercising" (SL9).

While the warm up emerged as a relatively consistent feature of a primary PE lesson, the skills based nature of the learning was also typical aspect with over half (54%) of SLs making reference to this approach. This aspect was discussed in relation to the context of a game, as one SL described the inclusion of; "...a skills based development to do with a particular sport" (SL9); while another typified the tendency of referring to a sport specific example; "...and we'll have like passing skills first, you know sort of working on your passing the ball to one another, doing the chest pass, overhead pass, bounce pass" (SL1). While SLs commonly talked about skill learning and related it to a specific sport, they also referred to the; "teaching of a skill" (SL13) so that children were shown how to; "kick a ball in a particular way" (SL13). This provided evidence of a more traditional teacher led approach, as illustrated by one SL who explained that he would; "try and teach the correct way to hold a hockey stick and dribble and I'll try and break it down for them" (SL35).

The final component that emerged as being characteristically found within a typical lesson was the game itself. The three aspects of warm up, skills practice and game were commonly linked, with SLs making some reference to all of these when elaborating on a typical games lesson. One SL noted that s/he would include a; "warm-up and then we'll do maybe one or two games for skills and then try and finish with a game based on whatever it is we're doing" (SL3). Another described a comparable lesson where the skills were applied in the final game, s/he said that; "it would start with a warm up or a fun, you know warm up type game, learning skill and then applying the skill into either a game or you know, just practising it really" (SL12).

The lessons described by SLs were commonly characterised as being structured around a traditional teaching model that included a warm up, a skill practice and the application of the skill in a concluding activity. While learning may typically be within the context of a more traditional teacher led approach, the description of a standard lesson also revealed the SLs' concern for the children as learners. There was clear reference to simplified games, to maximising participation and practice time and to organising lessons so that all children are included. This was typified by one SL who explained that s/he would:

> ...organise it so everybody gets involved in a way that keeps them busy. Moving the bowlers around, moving the batters, having it a limited overs thing, so everyone has a bowl for six bowls, all the batters face six balls, all the fielders move around their different places. (SL16)

The reason s/he gave for adopting this approach was to keep "...all the children involved all of the time or as often as possible" (SL16) and that he wanted "everybody to get a go at something" (SL16). S/he also made reference to the start of the lesson, explaining that "I try and get everybody handling the equipment as early as possible" (SL16).

SLs did therefore demonstrate a clear understanding of good practice in relation to learning and teaching within PE. They were able to describe commonly accepted teaching approaches and make reference to aspects of inclusion, movement skill practice and developmentally appropriate PE. While it is not surprising that SLs were knowledgeable about the pedagogy of PE, it should be highlighted again that they were rarely responsible for teaching all of the PE lessons. Their generalist colleagues were still predominantly the main teachers of the subject, but the extent of their PE skills and pedagogical understanding were less clear. The SLs themselves had little insight into the pedagogical approaches adopted by their colleagues when teaching PE. No reference was made to a systematic or formal approach to the peer observation of PE lessons by SLs: "As it stands, I've just had conversations with people; I haven't actually been to observe and check up on what people are doing" (SL1). This situation was a concern for some SLs with one noting that; "I've not actually observed; this is the thing, this is the key thing as PE leader I've not actually observed any PE lessons within the school" (SL9). The peer observation of lessons was recognised as being a worthwhile approach by SLs, but the time this would take and status of the subject meant that in practice observations were infrequent and only undertaken in a more informal and brief manner.

In summary, when SLs were discussing the content and approaches used when teaching primary PE lessons three key themes emerged: first, that teaching and learning was discussed within the context of games lessons; second, that lesson content focused on skill acquisition; and, third, that skills were taught by using didactic approaches.

In the first instance, the dominance of traditional games in the thinking of PE SLs is indicative of the historical position of this activity area within the PE curriculum (Capel,

2000, Kirk, 1992). Moreover as the limited provision and impact of ITE is thought to do little to change or challenge teachers' perceptions of what constitutes PE (Green, 1998; Pickup, 2007), most teachers are thought to revert back to games – the area that dominated their own experience of PE in school (Ward & Griggs, 2011). It would seem that the ideological basis of SLs' habitus and their view of what PE should entail, were formed by their own early experiences of competitive sport and team games. Put simply, teachers stick to what they know best; with Ward (2013) demonstrating that the narrow range of teachers' specific subject knowledge leads in turn to a narrow range of learning experiences being offered to children.

The second key theme to emerge from SLs description of a typical PE lesson was that the content of the lesson was characterised by a few common aspects. The first was that lessons started with a warm up, which then progressed to skill based practices, before finishing with the application of the skill in a concluding activity – which was typically a game. This skill based lesson structure followed the non-statutory guidance published over two decades ago to support the implementation of the first NCPE (NCC, 1992). Teachers adhered to this model despite more recent revisions of the national curriculum that have moved, in particular, towards a broader emphasis on understanding and applying tactics; and also the recognition that the continued exclusive focus on skill based learning was a weakness of games teaching in primary PE (Ofsted, 2002, 2005). The persistent use of this lesson structure illustrates the deeply-rooted nature of SLs' habitus in relation to the teaching of games. They replicated skill based approaches which they have experienced within the worlds of sport and PE; worlds that they have been a part of for most of their personal and professional lives hitherto. It also illustrates how habitus tends to be resistant to change, as teachers acted against

revisions in policy and persisted with engrained teaching models that were constructed around the teaching of sport specific skills.

The focus on teaching competence in skills has been identified as a persistent feature of primary games lessons (Kirk, 2010; Ward, 2013) and is seen to be an outcome of teachers' habituses which have been constructed, in the main, through their own early experiences of the close association between PE and sport (Capel, 2000, 2007). More recent developments in policy have, however, have confirmed this relationship. The conflation of PE and sport is, for example, largely attributed by Ward and Griggs (2011) to the interchangeable way in which policy makers' use these terms. The *Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links* strategy (DfES/DCMS, 2003), *Physical Education, School Sport and Young People* strategy (DCSF/DCMS, 2008) and the *Primary PE and Sport Premium* (DCMS & DfE, 2013) have all brought considerable investment into primary PE, but have also used the term 'PE and School Sport' indiscriminately. This interpretation has contributed to, and is reinforced by, the recruitment of sports coaches to teach curricular time PE (Ward & Griggs, 2011). This trend, towards the use of coaches, also looks set to entrench the adoption of a sporting model within primary PE lessons, as SLs are increasingly involved in lengthening chains of interdependency with a wider range of sporting groups and individuals – whose own practice is similarly thought to be characterised by a skill based orientation towards competitive games (Ofsted, 2009; Ward, 2013). The inclusion of SLs in sporting networks will seemingly exacerbate any predisposition they may have towards viewing PE and sport as being almost synonymous.

The third aspect described by SLs was that the teaching of skills in 'games' lessons followed a didactic pedagogical approach; that is teacher led, with a 'transmit replicate' or a 'practice'

model being adopted. As such, the learning constituted children being shown or told how to perform a skill, and then being expected to copy, practice and reproduce it. The skill is commonly practiced in isolation to begin with before being applied in a more demanding situation that might involve a measured performance, a display or, more often, a competitive game. This didactic teaching model is thought to be well established within primary games teaching as there is a strong correlation between accepted pedagogy and the area of the curriculum being taught (Ward, 2013). The habitus of SLs in relation to games teaching has been established and ingrained by their early and on-going involvement in different figurations which endorse the appropriateness of a teacher led strategy. In this regard it would seem that SLs are again replicating an approach that they have experienced as being suitable for the teaching of games (Green, 2003).

While the learning outlined by SLs was in the main structured around the characteristics of a more didactic teacher led approach, the narrative of some of the lessons also revealed a concern for the children as learners. There was, in part, a reference to simplified games, to maximising participation and practice time and to organising lessons so that all children were included. As such, while SLs typically referred to didactic, skill-based approaches, some also exhibited a clear understanding of what is claimed to be 'good practice' in relation to learning and teaching within PE. They were able to describe commonly accepted teaching approaches and made reference to aspects of inclusion, movement skill practice and developmentally appropriate PE. This apparent level of expertise on the part of SLs may reflect their greater involvement (by comparison with generalists) with specialist PE training and their inclusion in PE based figurations, which include other SLs and professional bodies such as the Association for PE.

Conclusion

Whole school planning for PE was a common feature of the 36 primary schools in the sample. Where it was in place it was accepted as part of the school's wider approach and was presented as valued professional practice; particularly as it was thought to provide support for colleagues. In contrast assessment featured far less prominently. The status of the subject and the limited provision of specialist training around assessment meant that teachers are often ill prepared to undertake what is seen to be a uniquely difficult process. The position of PE within the hierarchy of subjects in schools also means that assessment in PE is not prioritised and that there is less expectation for it to be completed in a detailed and structured manner. Finally, assessment, as with planning, is influenced by the network to which teachers belong. Unlike assessment, the more pressing need for planning, as a means of supporting other dependent colleagues, makes it more likely to be in place.

In relation to teaching, the data from the current study is consistent with existing research. SLs described PE lessons as being unduly focused on a traditional games curriculum, with didactic pedagogical approaches being used to achieve narrow skills based outcomes. This diluted 'looks-like-sport' model (Ward & Quennerstedt, 2014, 2015) is typical of games lessons but is also used in other areas of the curriculum. The historical dominance of games, the limited impact of ITE and the conflation of sport with PE are all thought to have resulted in a common sporting model being adopted within the broader network of primary PE teachers (Capel 2007). This has led to teaching methods that bind didactic and skill based pedagogy (Ward, 2011) and a degree of shared understanding within the figuration about the nature and purpose of PE as being about 'sport techniques' (Kirk, 2010).

Chapter Eight

PE SLs' perceptions of the impact of policy towards primary PE

Over the last thirteen years there have been three major government policies which have had a direct impact on primary school PE. The first was the PESSCL (DfES/DCMS, 2002) and PESSYP (DCSF/DCMS, 2008) policies that were launched by the New Labour administration in 2002. This approach was discontinued by the Coalition Government in 2011, but the reaction against this announcement meant that to a degree they were reinstated, but with reduced funding, under the guise of an interim policy of *Competition Managers.* The third policy was the *PE and Sport Premium* (DCMS/DfE, 2013) which was launched in 2013 and has since been extended until 2020. This commits central government to providing an annual lump sum to each primary school so that they can improve their provision of PE and school sport. This chapter will share the PE SLs views on the impact and value of each policy and, in doing so, will aim to develop an understanding of the context in which primary PE is taught.

The PESSCL and PESSYP policies

In 2002 the Government launched the PESSCL strategy. This was the first national strategy of its kind and it was claimed to represent the largest financial investment ever made by government in PE and school sport (DfES/DCMS, 2002). The funding continued as the initial strategy developed into the PESSYP policy in 2008, with £2.4 billion being invested in both policies up until 2010 (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013). All in all, this period was thought to be 'one of the most significant for the development of policy for physical education and school sport' (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2015, p.2).

The reaction to the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies was very positive, with every SL either identifying specific outcomes that they valued or speaking in more general terms about the positive impact of the policy: "It was really good; we were very lucky… the Partnership was amazing" (SL7). In a similar way, several SLs noted the favourable and broader impact that this policy had on primary school sport: "Honestly school sport, I think in primary changed so much since that initiative came in, like unbelievably" (SL5). Finally there was also a general feeling of regret that the policy had been discontinued:

> It was great; at the beginning and the way they developed it I thought was excellent. So that was a really good use of government money at the beginning; in fact I think it was a really good use of government money full stop and it's a shame it was cut. (SL12)

The greatest impact of the PESSCL and PESSYP strategies was thought, by the 36 SLs, to be in relation to the range of sporting provision that was made available to children through the SSP. Over four fifths (81%) of SLs noted the increase in sporting opportunities for children:

> Before we were in the SSP there was little to no competition, it had pretty much gone because teachers just don't have the time and don't have the resources or the facilities necessarily at their school to actually do it. So to actually have somebody that says to you, 'Right this event is on at this time,' is invaluable. (SL18)

The increased opportunity to engage with competitive sport was thought to have a number of different impacts. In the first instance it was valued by some SLs for the effect it had on the pupils, with one noting that the; "kids got a lot out of it; I mean they loved doing it" (SL4). Other SLs viewed the wider range of competitions as an effective way of introducing children to activities that they may want to pursue in their own time: "They've had an opportunity to get involved in sport outside of school; they might have had a taster in a tournament and then they've gone off and tried it somewhere else" (SL36). The increased number of competitions was also thought by some SLs to be the catalyst for greater involvement of external coaches:

"The fact that they had a tournament to go to means they had to practice for it, so it meant that we got the coaches to fit with what we were doing" (SL27). Finally, the involvement of external coaches and sports clubs was also thought in turn to make it easier for children to progress within their sport. One SL explained the view that; "The difference in what schools did in terms of sporting events and the access to specialists and having someone who understands sport and where it's going and the pathways through secondary school onto clubs, was immense" (SL16). It was clear that the SLs responded to the increase in sporting opportunities that were provided through PESSCL and PESSYP policies in different ways, but that the main benefits were considered to be; the increase in children's enjoyment of sport and their participation outside of school, the escalation in the involvement of sports coaches, and the development of clearer pathways to sporting excellence.

PESSCL and PESSYP policies were founded on the idea of families of schools working together in partnership. The whole notion of partnership was also valued by SLs, with three quarters (75%) of them commenting on the positive impact of this on their own school: "I think it's been really positive. We've developed a lot more links with the high schools, there's been a broader range of sports that the children have been able to participate in" (SL20). Another SL similarly noted the work undertaken with their secondary colleagues; "We've done some fantastic stuff with them; they've been really, really great" (SL6). The links that were developed between schools were valued as they provided an opportunity, at cluster meetings or in primary school PE lessons, for secondary and primary colleagues to come together to discuss and share good practice and provide an informal opportunity for staff development: "It worked really well for me. I think it was the making of our SSP that we had secondary specialists and we had the primary specialists, so we could really bounce off each other" (SL8).

The SSP, developed through PESSCL and PESSYP policies, was also thought to provide greater opportunities for more formal CPD, with a third (33%) of SLs valuing this aspect. Some SLs noted the increased funding that was available: "It had a massive impact because the money was there to fund those CPD days, because the funding came and paid for a supply teacher when we were out" (SL15). Others were alike in highlighting the benefits of having more extended opportunities to attend courses and develop expertise:

> It was great when Labour introduced this new, huge initiative, the partnership. It was fantastic. We had twelve days a year supply cover and they had loads of courses and it was brilliant. I sent them all on, 'Who wants to do gym? Right, yeah you…there's cover there to go and do gym. You do dance then, yeah…what do you want to do…?' It was brilliant. (SL5)

The final effect of SSPs, noted by over a third (36%) of SLs, was an increase in the status of PE and school sport; "I think it's given it a higher profile and it's given it the value and I think that's the difference" (SL18). Part of the reason for the increased status of the subject was thought to come from the way that a formal commitment was attached to the funding: "...the fact that there was an obligation; we bought into the partnership and the head had to sign to say we want to be part of this; and there was funding from the Government. It definitely had an impact on raising the status" (SL14). The increased investment in PE seemingly empowered the SLs as the funding and status brought increased curriculum time, CPD for teachers and more extracurricular opportunities for children. It was thought that it; "enabled those people who were trying to coordinate PE and trying to lead that subject, 'Actually someone's telling me I've got to do this so actually it's not me, you know we need to do this'." (SL21).

The response of SLs to the PESSCL and PESSYP policies, and the school sports partnership that developed as a consequence, was overwhelmingly positive. That is not to say, however, that there were not some reservations expressed around different aspects of how the policy worked in practice. A few SLs were concerned about secondary colleagues not understanding the primary setting. The perception was that secondary colleagues had expertise in their subject, but were not experts in working with younger children:

> That was where the Government went slightly wrong in that they were suggesting that secondary school teachers go in and teach primary school teachers; it's the same as having an Ofsted inspector coming in who isn't a primary school teacher and having no empathy whatsoever. (SL8)

Another associated issue related to the role of the SSCo, where normally one secondary PE teacher (but sometime a primary teacher) would work with a cluster of primary schools. This was designed to allow for partnerships and the sharing of good practice, but in some instances it was viewed more critically as a marketing tool for the secondary school: "...that's the only real reason that they had taken me on; I wasn't there as a PE teacher, I was there as a marketing tool, so what they do is they send me out into schools to try and get kids to come to the high school" (SL8).

These reservations about secondary teachers not having the expertise to teach in primary schools or of SSCos being used as marketing tools were raised very infrequently. They were attributed more to individuals rather than being a significant or recurring response. The one aspect of the partnership however, that did draw considerable criticism was the school sport survey that was designed to help evaluate the impact of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies. Around half (42%) of SLs were very critical of this aspect. In the first instance it was viewed as a contrived exercise that was likely to produce unreliable results, with one SL explaining the difficulties; "It was hard because the children had to do it themselves online...you did

have to be literally over their shoulder...because they could put in they'd done hundreds of hours of something and it would turn the whole thing round" (SL4). Another was more cynical and noted that; "it's massaged, isn't it? Definitely, definitely; they get what they want, don't they?" (SL35). The other main criticism of the school sport survey was that it was often seen as a time consuming and difficult exercise. One SL stated that it was a; "...pain in the arse to fill in, it's another job for me to do, that I haven't got time to do" (SL25), while another was similarly critical: "I've never heard of such rubbish and a waste of time in my entire life! That was a waste of money, effort, time; ridiculous, rubbish!" (SL12).

Despite these reservations, the overall reaction of the PE SLs to the PESSCL and PESSYP policies was positive, with several noting the favourable impact that they had in relation to developing SSPs, providing greater opportunities in sport, improving links with sports clubs and coaches and raising the status of PE and school sport. In the first instance, the SLs noted how the policy promoted the SSPs and played a central role in creating a local network for PE and sport. SLs were typically identified as the PLT and worked more closely with a secondary school PE teacher, called the SSCo, to improve the provision of so called 'high quality PE'. This work was based on regular cluster meetings, where the SSCo would meet with a small number of PLTs from local feeder primary schools, to discuss and share good practice in relation to primary PE. These meetings were valued by SLs as an opportunity for more informal staff development (by sharing and learning from the experiences of others), as well as forum for organising interschool tournaments and competitions. As such, the SLs experiences of the network created by SSPs seemingly coincided with the aims of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies of creating links between families of schools, to share expertise and enhance sporting opportunities (DfES, 2004).

The partnership model was not restricted to schools, however, as the aim of enhancing sporting provision meant that links were encouraged with external sports clubs and providers (Green, 2008). This development meant that SLs were increasingly involved in lengthening chains of interdependency, as the networks of primary PE came to include a wider range of educational and sporting organisations (Wilkinson & Penney, 2014). One issue with the ever more complex networks created by SSPs was that as the number of individuals and organisations involved increased, so too did the likelihood of conflict, as a wider range of potentially contrasting aims and objectives were included within the same partnership agenda (Williams, Hay & MacDonald, 2011). According to Elias (1978), conflict and cooperation are inherent aspects of interdependencies, and in this example, the balance of power between those involved seemingly favoured sporting individuals and groups, as they began to dictate who was enabled and constrained and which agenda was followed. While power was thought by Elias (1978) to be an inevitable characteristic of human relationships, he also maintained that power was relative rather than absolute, in that there was always a dynamic and changing balance of power between individuals and groups in any figuration. In this instance, PESSCL and PESSYP seemingly shifted the balance of power away from PE SLs and towards sporting organisations, as these policies were consistent with government intervention during this period that was more apparent in its attempt to influence extracurricular sport and develop a programme of sporting provision that was ostensibly beyond the control of PE (Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan, 2010). Specialist Sports Colleges were introduced to promote sporting excellence, Sportsmark and Activemark (for secondary and primary schools respectively) were designed in order to encourage sporting provision and, following the publication of *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000), more SSCos were appointed to create links with clubs and extend opportunities in extracurricular sport (Smith, 2013). In short, sporting organisations were empowered by government initiatives which repeatedly

promoted the sport discourse and 'reinforced competitive sport-based conceptions of physical education' (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2015, p.1).

The inclusion of PE SLs in SSPs, which had been established through government policies to create links with sports clubs and extend sporting provision, also led to a shift in power away from PE SLs and towards SSCos. The PE SLs noted the impact of the dominant sport discourse of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies in the number and range of sporting opportunities that were made available to the children in the SSP. This increase was largely attributed to the role of the SSCo, who assumed control of organising inter-school competitions from SLs and made increasing demands on their time to attend more tournaments and undertake all of the associated administrative tasks that this encompassed. In this regard, while SLs valued the provision of sporting opportunities for their children, they also pointed to what, at times, felt like an overwhelming number of tournaments and competitions that had been organised by SSCos on their behalf. The dominant sport discourse of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies shifted the balance of power from SLs towards SSCos, who provided more extracurricular sport and, in doing so, reaffirmed the centrality of competitive sport in the conception of PE (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2015).

The dominant sport discourse of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies not only led to a greater number of competitions and tournaments, but according to the SLs, also contributed to the greater inclusion of sports coaches in primary PE lessons. Elias (1978) believed that human interaction within networks had both intended consequences and also outcomes that were not planned or anticipated. In this instance the PESSCL and PESSYP policies were introduced when the workload of teachers, caused in particular by the requirements of preparing children for national curriculum tests, meant that they had limited available time to commit to the aim

of enhancing sporting opportunities. As such, sports coaches were increasingly used in place of teachers, with SLs commenting on the declining involvement of the latter in extracurricular school sport. In this regard an unintended consequence of the intentional action associated with the PESSCL and PESSYP policies was the changing relationship between schools and outside agencies, as the aim of improving sporting provision created a market for the 'buying in' of sports coaches (Wilkinson & Penney, 2014). Extracurricular clubs, which were previously provided for free by teachers, were now increasingly being run by external sports coaches and paid for by schools.

The outsourcing of extracurricular PE in this way is consistent with neo-liberal policies which promoted market principles in education (Ball, 2007). The market created through policies such as PESSCL and PESSYP, and also the 'Extended Services' programme (DfES 2005), meant that schools were engaging with commercial coaching companies to pay for the services that they could provide around extracurricular sport. The outsourcing of extracurricular PE also lengthened the chains of interdependency as sports coaches came to be part of the extended workforce of schools. This was seen by Griggs (2010) to be part of the process that led to the greater inclusion of sports coaches in primary PE lessons, as through their involvement in extracurricular sport, they became increasingly accepted as part of the primary school network. PESSCL and PESSYP policies promoted the changing relationship between schools and sports coaches, and unintentionally contributed to the greater involvement of coaches in primary PE lessons.

The final impact of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies was considered by some SLs to be an increase in the status of PE in relation to other subjects. Their perception was that with the significant money dedicated to the subject, there was a greater obligation on head teachers to

provide time and resources to support PE. This belief tallies with the apparent increase in time allocated to primary PE during this period. Warburton (2001) noted that before PESSCL and PESSYP policies pupils typically experienced 30 minutes of PE a week, while by 2010, the annual PE and Sport Survey (DfE, 2010a) claimed that around 94% of primary aged children were participating in at least 120 minutes of curriculum PE per week. Not only were PESSCL and PESSYP policies thought by SLs to increase the time for, and status of, primary PE, it was also considered that these policies were a source of power for SLs within their school figurations. SLs described, for example, how the two hour target for participation in PE and school sport, that was associated in particular with PESSCL (DfES/DCMS, 2002), gave them greater authority to ensure that other teachers actually taught their PE lessons. It would seem that while the balance of power within the increasingly complex networks created by PESSCL and PESSYP policies may have shifted away from SLs and towards sports organisations and SSCos, within the school figuration the same sport dominated policies acted in favour of the PE SLs.

Competition Managers

In 2010, Michael Gove (the then Secretary of State for Education) effectively marked the demise of the PESSYP strategy by announcing that the ring-fenced investment in SSPs was coming to an end. The reaction to this announcement, however, seemingly forced a partial reversal in policy between 2011 and 2013, as the Government provided funding for secondary schools to release a PE teacher to work with primary schools for one day a week. As such, SSCos were effectively replaced by competition managers, with the intention being to allow more time for the good practice of partnerships to be embedded (DfE, 2010c).

The response of SLs to the loss of the SSCo and the general demise of the SSP was not a positive one: "I think it's a mistake; I really think that it's a mistake" (SL12). Over three quarters (78%) of SLs stated that they regretted this policy decision and highlighted the good practice that would be lost; particularly in relation to the reduced leadership, opportunities and status of PE. One SL spoke of the change that he had seen over the life of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies:

> I think at first; it was new, it was interesting, there was a lot of effort put into it, there was a lot of people that were coming in that the Partnership were paying for, so PE sort of built itself up, but then as it sort of changed there's been less of that from the Partnership and its altered. I think people have just settled back into the fact it's a fad and have gone back down to where it was… the Government aren't seeing it as important so why are we? (SL3)

The SLs also argued that there needed to be some structure in place where an individual was responsible for coordinating PE and sport within a cluster; as the teachers themselves lacked the time to do so:

> I think you need somebody, you need that central enthusiasm to coordinate courses and things and get you going, because we've done some fantastic stuff with them; they've been really, really great. But a lot of things have sort of slipped by the wayside I think because of funding. (SL6)

Another SL similarly noted that;

> At its height I think it was brilliant and I think it's a shame that we've lost the time. I think it's crucial that it stays because with everything that a primary school teacher has to do, it needs somebody who is just PE minded and that is their role to do that. (SL21)

It was clear that the SLs did not want to lose the partnership approach and that they recognised the need for someone to provide leadership and coordinate competitions and training across schools. The competition manager role that was created to manage and direct the partnership was seen by SLs as being inadequate. In the first instance not all clusters had

one: “It’s all just gone now, just messed it all up. The SSCo; we haven’t got one at the secondary school now” (SL5). Even those clusters that had a competition manager also noticed a decline in the number of events that were provided. The time allocated to the role meant that the competition managers themselves were not able to organise and run many competitions and had to delegate or persuade others to take on this responsibility:

> ...you know what, Competition Managers are a joke, it’s an absolute joke. Competition Managers can’t do anything without SSCos. Competition Managers sit on their little ivory tower; I don’t mean that in a condescending way to Competition Managers but they just delegate. They’re going to be asking somebody to organise events…who’s going to do it off their own back? (SL8)

SLs also feared that the continued decline of investment in PE would lead to a further loss of the good practice that had been established through PESSCL and PESSYP policies. Without the structure and leadership provided through the partnership model, two main concerns emerged - firstly that the level of provision would gradually decline: “It won’t, it won’t happen, I know; it’ll fall apart and I think half the things will disappear as well because it’s something that needs funding and it needs someone there to organise it” (SL7). In this regard, the views of SLs were at odds with government policy, which was designed specifically to allow for the good practice established through the PESSCL and PESSYP policies to be embedded in schools. One SL stated that: “I think there will be elements of it that are embedded but it doesn’t take long for something to drop as staff change, as funding for resources slips” (SL20), while another was more forthright; “No chance. Teachers have already said, if we’re not there to organise it won’t go ahead” (SL7). The second concern, expressed by SLs, was that the extent to which this decline would be allowed to happen would vary based on the individual teachers or schools who were involved: “It will continue if you’ve got people in your school who are keen for it to continue but if it’s not a priority, then maybe not. It does need somebody to keep it going” (SL21). Thus, the provision of

sporting opportunities was thought to be reliant on the individual, rather than on a more secure structure which ensured a greater degree of consistency across schools. In this regard competition managers were thought to be a step backwards towards to a reliance on the "goodwill of the staff from the primary schools" (SL29) which had been shown in the past to produce variable practice.

The competition manager policy was seen to be ineffective as it aimed to maintain the good practice of the PESSCL and PESSYP policies, but without the same structure and level of support. One SL noted that it: "was working brilliantly. I know they've done a u turn now and it's come back in, but it's not as it was" (SL36). This decline was a source of frustration for SLs, with several noting how the positive impact of the partnership was being lost; "The SSCo movement came with a bang, made a big difference and then is now going out with a whimper; which is a shame" (SL16).

Overall, the SLs were critical of the move on the part of government towards competition managers as, despite the rhetoric around embedding good practice, it was seen to mark the end of the successful partnership model. SLs valued their position within the complex network of the partnership and in particular bemoaned the loss of the SSCo in coordinating the provision of PE and sport. SLs accepted that the relationships between those in different networks inevitably changes over time (Coakley, 2003), but feared that without investment in the SSP the bonds that held it together would gradually break. The Competition Manager, with less available time and money, was not perceived by SLs as having the same power within the figuration as the SSCo to sustain the work of the partnership in the same form.

SLs linked the reduced level of investment in competition managers to the declining status of the subject and the loss of good practice. SLs thought that, without the structure and leadership provided through the partnership model, there was a gradual decline in the level of provision with fewer opportunities for children to take part in sport. The apparent decline in interschool sport with the introduction of competition managers ran counter to the Coalition Government's explicit aim of increasing the provision of competitive sport (DfE, 2011). It would seem that the change in government, brought a 'changing policy landscape' (Wilkinson & Penney, 2014, p.1) where new initiatives were mismatched and even contradictory. It was also perceived by SLs that the extent of the decline in provision would vary in relation to the motivation of individual teachers. This view was consistent with the findings of Bowles and O'Sullivan (2012) who argued that teachers play a key role in determining which, if any, forms of school sport are promoted. SLs noted that where enthusiastic teachers (or head teachers) were in schools, provision would be maintained, but where this was not the case, provision would be reduced. Overall, it was thought that without investment in the secure structure of the partnership, the status and provision of PE would decline and there would be far greater disparity between schools.

The PE and Sport Premium

In March 2013, the Coalition Government replaced the interim investment in competition managers, with their own distinct policy; the *PE and Sport Premium* for primary schools. The *PE and Sport Premium* was initially launched for the two years up to 2015 (DCMS & DfE, 2013), but has since been extended up to 2020. This means that each primary school will receive around £9250 a year, depending on the number of pupils on roll, with a total investment by government of £150 million per annum. This was significantly more than that allocated to competition managers, but still less than the £162 million which was dedicated to

SSPs in 2010 (Roan, 2013). The *PE and Sport Premium* is markedly different to previous policies in that it is allocated directly to primary head teachers, rather than being provided indirectly through secondary schools. The money is also ring fenced for the purpose of improving primary PE and sport provision, but how this was achieved was to be decided at each individual school.

When asked about the *PE and Sport Premium* it was clear that all SLs welcomed this policy as it represented an investment in an area of the curriculum that they cared about. Without this financial support, there was again the perception from SLs that primary PE and sport would lack status and would be perceived by others as unimportant: "The Government had taken the money away from it. It'd been a bit of kick in the teeth for primary school PE. It'd filtered down to the schools that because the money's gone...it's like 'whatever' (SL33)." Other SLs had similar concerns about the lack of investment in the subject, believing that without it provision would rely precariously on the goodwill of individual teachers: "The investment is important as otherwise there's no pressure or expectation to provide opportunities and we just go back to relying on individual teachers, and if you haven't got a teacher who's keen at your school, then it just doesn't happen" (SL35). Another SL was even more pessimistic, claiming that; "...without the investment you'll lose the competitions. It'll just be that everybody teaches their statutory amount of PE time per week and that's all they'll do" (SL27). From the responses of SLs it appears that the premium is valued, as direct investment in the primary phase provides status for the subject. It was perceived that without investment, the subject would not be seen to be as important and provision would begin to drop away. In this regard the investment in primary PE was welcomed by SLs as it confirmed the value of PE and empowered them to develop the subject in school.

The funding provided by the *PE and Sport Premium* (DCMS/DfE, 2013), which equates to around £9250 for each primary school, must be spent on improving the provision of PE and school sport, but how this is achieved is to be decided at each individual school. When SLs were asked how they would choose to spend this money, three priority areas emerged: employing external sports coaches to contribute to mainly extra-curricular provision; training existing teachers or spending the funding on more practical aspects such as transport, equipment and subsidising extra-curricular clubs.

Devoting the *PE and Sport Premium* to the employment of sports coaches was the most popular suggestion, with around two thirds (60%) of the SLs favouring this use of the funding. One SL spoke for many when s/he explained that they would; "...be looking at buying in a bit more coaching time, because we're not getting the opportunities to have the clubs or events that we might have done in the past" (SL16). Another SLs noted, in relation to the use of the premium, that their school would; "...use it to pay for coaches to come in and deliver school sport; as it adds to the quality level and opportunities for the children" (SL24), while another in a similar way said that; "Our ppa cover in all honesty will continue. We wouldn't spend too much money on having coaches working alongside teachers jointly delivering, however beneficial that is. We are more likely to continue to use it as we do" (SL32).

In the main when talking about coaches, the SLs referred to the additional sporting opportunities or expertise that they would bring to extracurricular PE. In a few additional cases alternate models were suggested, ones which again referred to the value of the specialist, but were structured around the use of qualified teacher in this capacity. One SL illustrated this by stating that s/he; "would ensure that there was always a specialist PE

teacher…to manage PE and make sure that the extracurricular was in place" (SL16). While there was some disagreement around the type of specialists that might be used, the employment of a sports coach to assist with school sport, was still by far the most popular suggestion for the use of the *PE and Sport Premium*.

While many SLs suggested spending the premium of extracurricular coaching, around a third (31%), in contrast, believed that the money would best be used to train existing teachers to develop their skills and confidence in PE. One SL explained "I think the priority is CPD opportunities for staff and really having an opportunity to come together to share and moderate" (SL26). In a not dissimilar way, another SL suggested that:

> I think courses would actually be better than paying for somebody to come in. I'd rather pay and send teachers on courses to learn from to get ideas for themselves. Because if somebody comes in they only come in for six weeks of something, you might as well have gone on the course and learnt how to do it yourself. (SL30)

In this regard investing in existing staff, through CPD, was shown to be justified from the perspective of being a more sensible longer term approach. This would secure the skills of teachers and ensure that schools were still able to provide for PE when funding through the premium came to an end.

A few more practical aspects did emerge alongside the focus on sports coaches and CPD, with some SLs suggesting in addition that the money should be invested in transport:

> It would be this transport thing. If we can use minibuses to get children to festivals and competitions then we stand a better chance of getting more of our children involved. And if they get involved then they are going to want to join in with the training side beforehand, so you know it's a knock on effect then isn't it? (SL29)

Other SLs also wanted to spend the money on equipment "We need more equipment; we need loads of new resources, so that would be the first thing" (SL25. While others again believed that the money should also be spent on subsidising extra-curricular clubs:

> It will allow us to provide the after school clubs that currently the children have to pay for, for nothing. There will be children who won't be coming to cricket in the summer because their parents don't have forty two pounds, and I absolutely understand that. So that would be nice, to be able to offer that sort of thing, and not have to charge parents. (SL32)

In summary, the SLs' preferences for the use of the premium related to three main areas; bringing external sports coaches in to contribute to curricular or extra-curricular provision, training existing teachers or spending the funding on more practical aspects such as transport, equipment and subsidising extra-curricular clubs. As such, the SLs largely agreed with the suggestions put forwards by the Government as possible uses for the *PE and Sport Premium*; which included spending it on hiring specialist PE teachers or sports coaches, training existing staff, running competitions or supporting other extracurricular provision (DfE, 2014).

The most popular suggestion put forward by the majority of SLs was for the premium to be spent on the employment of sports coaches, because of the additional sporting opportunities or expertise that these were thought to bring. There was some reference to the use of sports coaches in primary PE lessons, but SLs primarily favoured using the premium in this way because of the perceived impact that it would have on the provision of extracurricular sport. This preference on the part of SLs suggests that they were inclined to view PE as primarily, or even essentially, as being about sport. The habitus of individuals is socially constructed through their everyday experiences of their relationships with others (Van Krieken, 1998). It develops within figurations as individuals learn the norms, values and behaviours that are

associated with their social group. In this instance, SLs early experiences in sport along with their involvement in lengthening chains of interdependency with various sporting clubs and providers will have shaped their view of PE and its relationship with sport. The most common response of SLs, when given the opportunity to share their own preferences for the use of the premium, was to prioritise extracurricular sport. This would imply that school sport featured most prominently in their view of the subject.

An alternate position adopted by a smaller number of SLs, was that the best use of the premium was to invest it in the training of existing teachers to develop their skills and confidence in PE. This position was consistent with Sue Wilkinson's (the strategic lead for the Association for PE), statement in response to the announcement of the premium (DfE, 2014b) that she was 'extremely pleased' that the funding was being used by head teachers to improve 'learning opportunities for teachers so they can deliver the very best quality lessons'. While some reservations have been expressed about the value or availability of appropriate CPD (Casey, 2012; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012), this approach has also proved popular with head teachers; with the Department for Education's (DfE, 2014) survey showing that the vast majority of primary schools described using the premium to up-skill and train existing staff. This may be a more pragmatic long term approach on the part of SLs, as the outsourcing of PE does raise questions as to the sustainability of this fee based arrangement. The *Primary Sport and PE Premium* is currently used by most schools to fund the use of coaches, but when this source of money ends in 2020 schools will, it seems, have to find the resources to pay for this educational service themselves. The schools willingness to do so is likely to be determined by the extent to which they depend on the service provided by coaches (Williams, Hay & MacDonald, 2011).

Overall, while a small number of SLs suggested using the premium for transport, equipment or subsidising extracurricular clubs, the two main responses related to the staffing of primary PE and school sport. This reflected what has been shown to be the most popular use of the premium in schools; that it has been used in the recruitment of specialist teachers and coaches, and in the training of existing staff (DfE, 2014). The most common responses of the PE SLs appeared to reveal the second-nature of their habitus as they were concerned for the longer term provision of PE, and were particularly inclined towards viewing the subject as being primarily about sport.

Conclusion

SLs were consistent in recognising the value of government policies that brought investment into PE and school sport. Not only was the financial aspect thought to be essential in funding provision, but equally important was the status and power that this investment afforded the subject and subject leader respectively. In this regard the policy context for primary PE is thought to be vital as without specific PE and school sport policies it is feared that the subject would flounder. SLs also valued and were influenced by the notion of working in partnership. Successive policies have promoted this model as a means of sharing expertise and extending sporting opportunities for pupils. Indeed, recent policies have been consistent in their aim of extending extracurricular school sport, with SLs working in lengthening chains of interdependence with sports coaches, SSCos, competition managers, secondary PE teachers and sports clubs to achieve this goal. The inclusion of primary SLs in sporting figurations has helped to reinforce their sporting habitus and positioned school sport at the heart of PE. This change is demonstrated by SLs' own preference for spending the *Primary Sport and PE Premium* on extending extracurricular opportunities through the recruitment of sports

coaches. When given free rein to decide how to invest in PE, the SLs actually chose to prioritise extracurricular school sport.

Chapter Nine

PE SLs' perceptions of the value and status of primary PE and school sport

PE is a socially constructed practice that is shaped, to some extent, by teachers' understanding of the nature and purpose of the subject. Thus, it is important to investigate SLs' and teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards PE and school sport as this will help to explain and justify their actions (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012). This chapter is divided into two sections, with the first being focused on PE as a curricular subject and the second examining extracurricular school sport. The first section will begin by presenting and discussing SLs thoughts on the value of PE, before examining their perceptions of how generalist class teachers view the subject. It will end by discussing the main themes that emerge from this section, with particular reference to the status of primary PE. The second section will begin by identifying who leads extracurricular school sports clubs and how this provision is paid for. It will then conclude by analysing the status of extracurricular sport and how this relates to the behaviour and beliefs of the SLs.

PE SLs' views on the value of primary PE

When SLs were asked about their own feelings towards PE they were unequivocal in stating its importance. Some stated their belief that it is "as important as anything else" (SL3) or as "important as maths and literacy" (SL4). Other SLs claimed that it should have higher standing, with one noting "I think it's really important, I think it needs to have a higher priority, I think it needs investment, it needs clear timings against it of how much sport should be done in a week" (SL20).

When asked to elaborate and explain why they thought PE was important, the SLs made reference to a range of qualities that could be grouped in order of prominence under five main

headings; enjoyment, health, sport, social development and sport for all. The most frequently given reason for the value of PE was that children themselves enjoyed or valued the subject. This response featured prominently and was given by over half (56%) of the SLs. One SL explained how he had first noticed the extent of children's enjoyment: "I was taking booster groups in maths in the afternoons and I saw children's reaction to being taken out of PE lessons to go and do a booster maths group and it really sort of sealed it home how much the children value that time" (SL3). Other SLs were explicit in stating how much children enjoyed the subject. One noted that; "They just get a lot from the lesson and they all, every child in this school loves sport, they all enjoy… they all look forward to the lesson" (SL23), another similarly claimed: "What we do know is that children love it, don't they? There's not many kids in primary school that don't enjoy playing games" (SL8).

Health also featured prominently as a reason given for the importance of PE. Over half (53%) of the SLs highlighted the capacity of the subject to extend activity levels and often presented this argument as a means of combating the perceived impact of more sedentary leisure time pursuits. Some SLs linked the value of PE to enhancing fitness, with one exemplifying this by stating that; "I think fitness, fitness of children should be a priority, I really do" (SL12). Others saw the benefit of providing an opportunity for exercise: "...you know the children do enjoy doing it and they do need to get a bit of exercise, they need to get out and run around" (SL1). While another linked the opportunity for exercise to sedentary lifestyles;

> I just think that they gain so much from it and they're so involved with computer games and handheld games and the chances they get are so limited in some places, that I just think we should all be able to give them some kind of physical exercise, just to show them that it can be fun as well. (SL2)

Finally, other SLs also noted the effect of sedentary lifestyles, but did so more explicitly in relation to health. One stated that: "I prioritise children's health and their interest in sport

because...that helps socialise children and get them away from the Xbox diet" (SL10). While another said that; "I suppose I want them to keep active, playing games. I want them to have, very much you know, something to do with their leisure time because you know, they've got to keep themselves healthy" (SL6).

Sport also featured, in its own right, within the rationale that SLs provided for the study of PE. It was valued by around half (47%) of SLs as an important avenue for children to achieve recognition that they wouldn't otherwise receive. As such, being selected for teams, winning competitions and enjoying sporting success was viewed as being important in itself for the self-esteem of children or as a starting point for future sporting achievement. Some SLs highlighted the value of success in sport for some of the pupils, with one noting that; "...not all children are academic and I just think if they're not, they're all entitled to find something they are good at and to have that sense that they're achieving something; and a lot of them find it in sport" (SL3). Another similarly noted how sport was important for one child and how this might influence her future:

> There's one of our year 5 girls at the moment whose behaviour is terrible, but went to a dance festival on Monday night and not just within our school but teachers from other schools commented on how much she stood out because she has the potential. You might not be good at maths and English but here's something you're good at; and you could well be a star of the future. (SL33)

This sentiment, of primary PE initiating future sporting success was echoed by another member of staff who suggested that:

> I think it's really important because I look at some children in senior school now, I don't think, had they gone somewhere else, would have ever achieved what they have achieved...a lot of them come back and do some coaching for us now and I'll sort of say, 'Oh, are you still playing netball,' 'Yeah,' 'What position are you playing?' 'Still playing goal attack' and I actually feel well that's how it started really...I do think what they do in primary school is crucial to their future. (SL2)

The social aspect of sport and PE was also highlighted by around a third (31%) of SLs as a reason given for the value of the subject. They considered PE to be an area where children could be part of teams, make friends and learn skills that related to working with and alongside others. One SL stated that; "I think that it brings a lot of the personal and social; that being in part of a team or even having your own individual interest, even if you do a sport on your own you tend to go and join a group" (SL10). The value of working with others was highlighted by another SL:

> Sport is really important for social development, for interaction as children get more and more in front of a little screen and individualised, they need that social engagement of sport, that teamwork, working together, learning to lose, learning to win so I hope it's given a high priority and I'd like to think that, from my point of view as, this school would continue to do that. (SL20)

The argument for PE as a means of promoting the social development of a more 'rounded' child was in some cases thought to make them more effective learners. One SL argued that teachers should; "...find the time or find the commitment to change" (SL3). His point was that "if they got out for PE and did something, they may well affect the other things around them as well without necessarily having to sit kids down at a table and throw more information at them" (SL3). Another SL similarly stated that "generally what you get, because teachers are so pressured to get academics right, is that it's lost and it's just as important as anything else" (SL11). He concluded by saying that "...actually, if you get all these other things right, if you get all the facets of learning right then your well-rounded child is created and learning takes place because they're happy" (SL11).

The concern for involvement or a 'sport for all' rationale was also finally seen from over a quarter (28%) of SLs. They justified the role of PE as being a means of providing a variety of opportunities that children wouldn't otherwise experience and a way of introducing them to

more positive leisure time activities that they could continue to pursue beyond school. One SL explained their approach to organising lessons:

> We rotate them, one of them's around an interest that they've probably never done so we've had archery, we've had fencing and in September we've got jujitsu and so those are things that they may never have done before so they get a taste and the opportunity to have a go. (SL10)

Thus the common theme to sit alongside the provision of wider opportunities was that this then prepared children for lifelong involvement with active leisure. One SL noted that "The PE side of things is giving them skills for hopefully leisure really in the future. It's just giving them variety" (SL22), while another also said that "It's important to develop all those basic skills they need to then take on to live an active life really and engage in clubs after school and feel confident to do that" (SL19).

Finally, in a few cases the desire to provide opportunities was related to social class, with one SL who worked in a more disadvantaged area stating that:

> I don't think people realise the demands; if you're in a nice affluent area with a lot of support from parents to work at home with their kids and join clubs its different… our kids don't get to do those, you know, school is their only avenue to have opportunities in education and sport. (SL19)

Overall, the SLs were unequivocal in stating the importance of PE and provided a wide ranging, often ideological, rationale for its place in the curriculum. Pupil enjoyment, health and sport featured most prominently within this rhetoric, with social development and sport for all, also being referenced.

The most prominent of the reasons claimed by SLs was enjoyment (more specifically of sport); with PE being seen as a favourite lesson and something that children 'loved' and

looked forward to. The children's supposed enjoyment of PE was thought to be obvious, rewarding and immediately apparent in the way that they engaged in lessons. Placek (1983) noted how pupil enjoyment is often seen to be evidence of effective teaching, but this rationale has also led to PE being understood as being a more recreational break from schooling (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012) and an opportunity to get out of the classroom (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). As such, Elliot et al (2013) raised some doubt as to whether enjoyment was on its own a sufficiently educational rationale; as it often masked a lack of, what they saw to be, more meaningful learning.

Health also featured prominently within the rationale that SLs claimed for the subject. The way that this was presented varied, with some reference being made to fitness, exercise and physical activity, but the dominant theme was that engaging in PE and school sport would supposedly lead to unspecified health benefits. Primary PE is often presented as having the potential to impact favourably on young peoples' health (Petrie & Lisahunter, 2011) as it is believed to play a crucial role in enhancing engagement with physical activity (Green, 2014). The well documented concerns for childhood obesity (Griggs, 2007) have added to the arguments around the perceived value of physical activity and in this instance SLs claimed engagement in (typically) sport as being a healthy alternative to more sedentary leisure time activities that children were perceived to engage in.

Sport was also claimed by SLs as an area in which some children could excel and gain recognition. This was seen to be particularly valuable for the self-esteem of those who had less success in other aspects of school life and was also portrayed as a possible starting point for future sporting success (Bailey et al, 2009). The social aspect of PE was also typically related to sport, as it was considered an area where children would operate in teams and

supposedly learn skills that related to working with and alongside others. Finally, a 'sport for all' rationale was also seen from a smaller number of SLs, who were concerned with providing a range of experiences and introducing all children to sporting activities as part of a more inclusive society (Elliot et al, 2013).

Overall, the SLs were consistently positive in their attitude towards primary PE. They had a clear and deep-rooted perception of the subject as a worthwhile and valuable part of primary schooling. This belief ostensibly reflected the PE SLs' own experiences, as their habitus had been constructed through their involvement in social networks that were established around PE and sport. SLs' formative experiences and their on-going work within PE figurations had seemingly influenced their attitudes and established a positive ideological perspective on the value of primary PE

While the SLs were unequivocally positive in their view of the subject, the claims that they presented were varied. They made reference to a comparatively wide range of ideological arguments, but these views were typically unified by their orientation around sport. As such, when SLs referred to pupil enjoyment, health benefits, personal and social development and enhanced self-esteem, they typically did so in relation to children's engagement in sport. This again reflected the habitus of PE SLs as their beliefs and attitudes are influenced by their changing relationships within increasingly complex figurations. The lengthening chains of interdependence between primary PE and sporting organisations have reinforced the historical position of this activity area within the PE curriculum (Hardman, 2008; Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012) and the uneven emphasis on the teaching of sport techniques in primary PE lessons (Kirk, 2010). It has also shaped the habitus of PE SLs as the ideological claims that they made in the name of PE were typically, and often explicitly, linked to sport. It seems that

the inclusion of PE SLs in increasingly complex, sport based figurations confirms their own hegemonic ideology and ensures a great deal of continuity in their practice. PE SLs appear to be 'true believers' in PE who view their subject as being primarily about sport (Green, 2003).

Finally, the arguments presented by the primary PE SLs were broadly consistent with those claimed by secondary PE teachers when discussing the value of their subject (Green, 2003). There was some reference to preparing children for lifelong participation and one SL spoke about motor skill development; but beyond this there was very little evidence of SLs repeating the arguments that have been put forward by academics and professionals for the specific value of PE in the primary age phase. Primary PE is claimed to be the foundation for the development of proficient movement skills (Jess & Dewar, 2004) that supposedly underpin future sporting success and lifelong engagement in health enhancing physical activity (Griggs, 2007). The development of fundamental movement skills is thought to take place within the primary age phase (Gallahue & Ozmun, 1998) and is claimed to be important as it allows children to move beyond, what is described as, a 'proficiency barrier' and access a range of sports and more complex activities. The rhetoric around this primary based argument was not referenced by the SLs. There was no mention of developmentally appropriate PE, fundamental movement skills, proficiency barrier or physical literacy. There was little evidence of primary PE SLs accepting, or even being aware, of these arguments, as the sport and health based rationales associated with secondary PE continued to dominate their thinking (Capel & Blair, 2007; Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012). SLs' views are likely to have been influenced by the longevity and impact of the networks that they have been a part of. Their comparatively short experience of ITE will have limited their time to investigate and articulate a specific and distinct rationale for primary PE. As such, their views on the value of the subject were more likely to be influenced by their early experiences and by the

relationships that they have within increasingly complex figurations – that include secondary colleagues and sporting organisations. These relationships appear instrumental in determining the habitus of the SLs and their views on the value of primary PE.

PE SLs' perceptions of classroom teachers' views on primary PE

SLs valued PE and were able to articulate a range of reasons to justify its importance. In contrast, when SLs were asked about how other staff felt about teaching the subject, the response was mixed; with relatively even numbers perceiving feelings to be positive, varied or negative. In the first instance a little over a third (35%) of SLs claimed that other teachers were positive towards the subject, in that they enjoyed teaching it or valued and appreciated its impact. These positive views were consistently qualified, however, with SLs recognising that the conflicting demands of primary teaching meant that individual members of staff didn't always act in accordance with their feelings. In particular it was noted that primary teachers, who were positive towards the subject, were still influenced by the challenge of organising lessons, the status of PE and the demands of teaching a wide primary curriculum. In the first instance the challenge of organising PE lessons was seen to undermine positive intentions:

> In their heart they know; you want fit children, they enjoy it, PE is great. But sometimes there's a bit of effort involved, a bit of noise, a bit of getting resources together. Effort for them to have to get changed or whatever, and it's easier sometimes to stay in the classroom. (SL12)

In a similar vein the status of PE, particularly in relation to external assessment, was thought to undermine good intentions towards the subject: "I think it is valued, I just don't think it has the priority because you're not assessed on it; you're not called a failing school if you're not doing high quality PE" (SL12). Another SL similarly compared the standing of PE to other subjects that were involved in external assessments and the impact that this had:

> I think they do like it but I think you know, you've got added pressures in various years to achieve standards in other things and so I do think sometimes it slips by the wayside because you aren't judged on how well you do PE and at the end of the day, if you come out with bad scores in English, maths, science at either Key Stage, you can be jumped on. (SL1)

Finally, the class teachers' positive feelings towards PE were also thought to be undermined in practice by the demands of a wide curriculum: "I think people do enjoy it but there's too much in our curriculums to teach now, in all subjects, so that things bend, which is the problem" (SL1). Another SL outlined more starkly the impact of the pressure to teach all subjects on class teachers' perceptions of PE; "I think they all have in their mind how valuable it is, but then I think those that teach a class of their own are also aware of how much other stuff they've got to fit in, and that makes it inevitably to them, expendable" (SL3).

In summary the perception of this group of SLs was that class teachers valued PE, but the constraints of their workplace meant that in practice they did not act in accordance with these views: "Their heart is in the right place, everybody knows they should be doing it, but they're pulled to other things. They just feel like they've got no choice" (SL3).

While over a third (35%) of SL perceived other teachers to have positive feelings towards the subject, a similar number (29%) believed that class teachers' feelings towards PE were more varied. They thought that the members of staff at their school would have contrasting feelings towards the subject with some being more or less positive than others: "I think you'd have a 50/50 split; but nobody moans about doing it. They moan about going on sporting events… sometimes" (SL18). In a related manner another stated that; "I think some teachers are more confident, obviously than others" (SL13). While finally one SL explained how feelings

towards PE varied as the staffing base changed over time; “I think here at the moment in time they’re all, you know, they like PE, they see the benefits of it, happy to teach it; but in our four years here we have had teachers who haven’t and they kind of like don’t teach it really…” (SL15).

Finally over a third (35%) of SLs claimed that other teaching staff were negative in their attitude towards the subject; that they didn’t value it or want to teach it, and that this was seen in their willingness to avoid or cancel lessons. It was clear in these situations that PE was viewed quite negatively: “I think it’s quite low down in our school…It’s sad to say that but from my experience, as a whole school...I know that other things have got in the way, unfortunately” (SL12).

In these settings, the feelings of staff towards PE had seemingly had a damaging effect on the number of lessons that were taught, one noted that; “We have been in positions in the past where people have been reluctantly squeezing in one half an hour PE lesson at best” (SL3); while another stated that “Some of the teachers would rather never teach PE ever again if they could get away with it” (SL10). This reluctance to teach the subject was seen more specifically in some activity areas “I made this scheme and I gave it to her and she instantly said, ‘Well I’m not teaching football,’ and I felt like saying, ‘Well I don’t turn around and say ‘I’m not teaching poetry’ just because I’m no good at it’.” (SL12).

The negativity and reluctance of some primary teachers to engage with PE was seen as an issue for the children; “...it’s funny how subjects like art, PE become expendable; when other things are going on, they’re the first things to go and how actually it’s probably those things that quite a lot of the children need to do” (SL3). This negativity was also seen to be an issue

for other teaching staff, with one SL sharing their feelings; "...as I've not had so far the best experience of being coordinator of the whole school, I wouldn't put myself forward as a PE Coordinator in another school because of the negativity I've found" (SL12).

In summary, the SLs' views on how generalist teachers perceived primary PE brought a varied response. Some SLs perceived feelings to be positive towards the subject, stating that generalist teachers enjoyed teaching PE and recognised its worth to pupils, while others were unambiguous in their view that the teaching staff at their school did not value the subject. In these settings the staff were perceived to be quite negative towards teaching PE and, as such, tended to avoid the subject, or some of the specific activity areas, where it was possible to do so. This was thought to have a negative impact on children, but also on SLs; who were left isolated within their school network and less willing to continue in their present role.

The attitudes and behaviours of the PE SLs were perceived, by the SLs themselves, to be very different to those of generalist teachers in relation to PE. The difference in habitus is likely to be a consequence of the varying experiences, of PE SLs and generalists. For the SLs, their early experiences of the interactions between significant factors, such as family and schooling had socialized them towards sport and a positive perception of PE (Green, 2014). All SLs described themselves as having always being 'sporty' or as having a 'love' of sport. In contrast, generalist classroom teachers, with their comparatively limited sporting capital and interest in the subject, were not as receptive to their ITE training in PE. Subsequently many were thought to start their teaching with little knowledge or confidence in the subject (Morgan & Bourke, 2008). Finally, as generalists and SLs enter the profession, they are also influenced by other more experienced and powerful teachers towards the established and accepted practices seen within the school. However, while increasingly complex school

figurations do have an impact, ideologies are deep-rooted and habitus tends to remain firmly anchored in the formative years (Green, 2003). Thus, the values and behaviours of primary teachers towards PE are firmly established and difficult to change. An understanding of habitus draws attention to longer term processes that are heavily influenced by early experiences, especially in developing confidence in the subject (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). This understanding helps explain why those in the same school settings might have such different views towards PE; as generalists and SLs will have had different experiences of different networks and received contrasting messages about the value of PE at each stage of socialization.

The status of PE in primary schools

The SLs were overwhelmingly positive in their view of PE, providing varied reasons for its place on the curriculum. In contrast the perceptions of generalist class teachers towards PE were thought to vary, with some being shown to value and enjoy teaching the subject, while others clearly did not. The variable views of generalists about the value of PE and the reported avoidance of teaching PE lessons, suggests that PE had a relatively low status by comparison with other subjects. The low status of PE is perhaps seen most clearly in the number of lessons that were cancelled, even by those who were thought to value the subject. This contrasts, however, with the privileged position of PE, as a mandatory subject across all Key Stages of the national curriculum, and the sustained 'amount of interest and government investment in PE and school sport' (Griggs, 2012, p.39). This section will aim to make sense of SLs' experiences; which tended to show that PE had a relatively low status within their primary schools. When SLs were asked more specifically about the status of curriculum time PE, three key themes emerged; the dominance of core subjects, how the nature of PE made it vulnerable to being cancelled and finally the influence of head teachers. The first clear theme

to emerge was that the core subjects dominated and that PE by comparison was not as important.

The dominance of the core subjects

Since the inception of the national curriculum, the core subjects of English, mathematics and to a lesser extent, science, have been prioritised within primary education as the focus of National Curriculum tests (which are often referred to as SATs). The outcomes of these tests are made public and are one of the main ways in which a school is judged. This was thought to affect the relative status of PE in relation to the core subjects: "PE is not assessed in the same way as core subjects. If PE lessons aren't going well no one knows, if your maths and numeracy aren't going well then everybody knows. The SATs results are really important" (SL30).

The Government's prioritisation of core subjects was also experienced first-hand by teachers when Ofsted inspectors visited their schools and devoted the majority of their time to English and mathematics:

> ...if Ofsted came in tomorrow they're not really going to be interested in how the PE is monitored; they weren't interested last time when they came to visit us which disappointed me. I was a bit surprised how little interest they took in what we were doing in PE. It was all numeracy and literacy and you know that is important in schools. (SL16)

Another SL similarly noted that; "Ofsted come in and look at your maths and your literacy...they're the most important things, everything else is just something else, it's just another paragraph that they just tick a box for" (SL11).

While Ofsted have scrutinised how schools initially spent their *PE and sport premium*, the perception of SLs was still that; "most time will always be spent on English and maths" (SL31). This in turn was felt to impact on the status of the subject with one SL saying that; "It's just not deemed important and it just does my head in, it does my head in. We have an Ofsted system that doesn't properly look at PE provision, so therefore if Ofsted are saying it's not important, it's not important" (SL11).

The impact of the Government was most frequently noted through their influence on National Curriculum tests and Ofsted, but other policies were also thought to reinforce the established position of core subjects. It was noted that: "Every time another initiative comes in, it normally impacts on literacy or it impacts on maths and you have to go back to that and address that first and sometimes PE can get, you know, pushed back" (SL20). This position was explained further by the same SL: "Sport is really important...but obviously you have got constraints and if the Government want X, Y and Z done first and they're giving that priority it's very hard to then change and find the time to be able to do things that they don't value" (SL20).

The importance of core subjects was also felt directly by teachers through the increased monitoring of those subjects by senior staff. One teacher stated that; "...you are scrutinised a lot more so the demands on English and mathematics will take precedence. Maybe it's not the right thing to do but at the moment there's no other choice" (SL19). The pressure, through external government policies and internal scrutiny by senior staff, clearly shaped the priorities of teachers within schools: "The problem is it doesn't have as much standing as maths and English and science… if it came down to choosing, you know between a maths task or a PE task I'd have to go with the maths because that's the priority" (SL15).

The overall impact of the dominance of core subjects was seen to be the insufficient time for other foundation subjects. As a result, the timetable was often a congested and contested area:

> I think it's just the way the timetable is and like in the morning its maths and literacy so every afternoon it's fitting in your topic, your two hours of PE, your geography, your science, your RE, your music, everything and to do that in kind of five afternoons and on Friday afternoon we have something called monkey madness, which is part of our behaviour thing so that's Friday afternoon out, so it's just generally fitting it all in I think; you can't physically do it. (SL4)

Thus, when SLs were asked about the status of curriculum time PE, the first clear theme to emerge was that the core subjects dominated and that PE, as a foundation subject, was not as important (Morgan & Hansen 2007). Since the inception of the national curriculum, the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, have been the subject of National Curriculum Tests (commonly known as SATs). As a consequence of the neo-liberal policies which introduced competition into education, the performance data from these tests is also published in league tables, allowing parents to choose the supposedly more successful schools for their children to attend. Given the importance of SATs, teachers and the broader teaching profession, prioritize academic success in the core subjects which inevitably attract additional time and resources within schools and ITE (Blair & Capel, 2011; Green, 2008). English, mathematics and science were thought to dominate the school timetable and the time allocated to subjects during ITE, to the detriment of other foundation subjects, particularly PE (Griggs, 2010; Rainer et al, 2012).

The importance of core subjects was experienced first-hand by SLs when Ofsted inspectors visited their schools and devoted the majority of their time to English and mathematics. This reinforced the status of these subjects and, while Ofsted were initially obliged to scrutinise how schools spent their *PE and Sport Premium*, there was some frustration at the extent to

which English and mathematics in particular were prioritised. In short, the dominance of core subjects has seen PE become increasingly marginalised, with its status and position within the hierarchy of subjects being questioned (Smith, 2013).

The vulnerability of PE in primary schools

When examining the status of PE, the first theme to emerge from the interviews with SLs was that that the core subjects do dominate within primary schools and do have a high status; they inevitably attract additional time and resources, and dictate the timetable. The second theme was that while the status of PE should be comparable to other foundation subjects, its unique nature often compromised its position within schools. The particular challenges associated with teaching PE, meant that it was often the first lesson to be cancelled, which further undermined its status: "it is more demanding, more hassle to set up and when the pressure's on you really don't want that" (SL29). Another SL explained this restriction in more detail:

> PE is great once it's set up, but even I get put off when I'm teaching some sports. It's all the cones, all the bibs, shouting at the kids to get them organised...and that's after you've had the palaver of getting changed. There's no doubt it's easier to stay in the classroom. (SL30)

One other SL similarly noted that "if you are staying in class doing literacy, then history, then RE it's all okay, but some of the other subjects like art and PE need so much more. It's moving the pupils about, moving resources, it can be quite daunting" (SL34).

The demands of moving children to another part of school, getting them changed and then setting up equipment are quite unique and do cause problems for teachers. PE also has the added difficulty of often being taught outdoors. This is thought to bring further problems for teachers: "It's not so much getting them changed to go out, although you do have to check they've got the right clothes, it's afterwards. When it's wet, sorting out, hanging up wet

clothes is a real joy" (SL29). While inclement weather brought additional demands, the main reason for avoiding lessons was thought to be the comfort of the teacher rather than that of the children. One SL stated that; "I'll just go out, the kids don't mind, they want to do it. The teachers is the problem, don't want to get cold or a bit wet" (SL31).

The particular demands of teaching PE can make it more onerous. Some of the organisational demands of the subject, which are arguably amplified when teaching outside, can persuade teachers to avoid it. It was felt that as a subject "it takes a bit more effort" (SL12) and that "PE is the easiest one to cancel" (SL34). One SL elaborated on this, saying that "a lot of the teachers aren't confident teaching PE, they do it begrudgingly. If there's a bit of rain in the air or some tables need clearing before you can use the hall, then that's it, game over. It really doesn't take much" (SL35). Another SL reiterated this view "you're pushed for time; you have the option of taking pupils out and getting them through all that comes with a PE lesson, or you carry on and get work finished in class. What would you do?" (SL30).

The prioritisation of core subjects was shown to limit the amount of available time for all of the other areas of the curriculum. The nature of PE was not thought to be helpful in this regard as PE lessons were not conducive to efficient use of time. The distinct demands of moving children to another part of school, getting them changed and then setting up equipment are quite unique and do challenge teachers. PE is also different in that it is often taught outside. This brings additional problems of preparing for and dealing with more inclement weather, organising children in a larger space and sometimes teaching in a more public arena. The combined effect of these unique demands was shown to make PE vulnerable, with the possibility of rain or the need to move tables, being cited as sufficient reasons to avoid the lesson.

The nature of PE means that it is different to other subjects, and given the typically limited sporting capital of generalist teachers along with the paucity of PE training (Blair & Capel, 2011), it is perhaps not surprising that generalists are willing to avoid lessons or even to hand them over entirely to sports coaches (Griggs, 2010). The particular demands of teaching PE, along with the limited confidence and ability of generalist teachers, have, among other things, contributed to the inclusion of more sports coaches in PE. This will in itself seemingly be a further threat to the already vulnerable educational status of primary PE, as the apparent change in the level of qualification needed to teach the subject will increasingly marginalise its position in schools.

In short, the unique nature of PE means that it brings additional challenges for teachers; ones that are different to what they normally face within the classroom. This can contribute to the avoidance of PE lessons and in turn to its relatively low status in primary school. Cancelling PE lessons devalues the subject and, in a cyclical manner, the low status of PE then makes it more vulnerable to further abandonment.

The influence of head teachers

The final theme to emerge, alongside the dominance of the core subjects and the unique nature of PE, was the influence of head teachers in determining the status of PE. The status of the subject was thought by SLs to be decided in part at a local level by the preferences of the head teacher. If the head teacher valued PE then they were seen to have the authority to ensure that there was a clear commitment to teaching the subject. One SL noted that; "The culture of a school is led from the head down" (SL16), while another said that; "I think it depends on the preference of the head and what she thinks works for her school" (SL18).

Where the head teacher was less committed or did not value the subject, then it was seen to suffer:

> It all depends on the schools attitude towards PE. Some of the primary schools really see the benefits of it, buy into it, others are just a waste of time as long as they're doing their two hours a week so they can tick the box when they get asked by Ofsted. They don't really care what the kids are doing, and again it stems from the head and the management team at the top on what that schools views are on PE. (SL33)

The SLs recognised the powerful position of head teachers in determining the ethos of the school, with the most frequently cited example of this influence being on extracurricular rather than curricular time PE. Where the head teacher was supportive, SLs were allowed, or were told, to enter and attend more competitions and festivals. One SL stated that; "We do a lot more so since our new head's come in because he's very sporty" (SL1), while in contrast another said that; "In years gone by we've been well known for sport and then because we went through a period of changes with head teachers who didn't necessarily have the same passion for it, it sort of all drifted" (SL3). Head teachers were also thought to influence the success of schools in competitions by investing more time, resources and value in sport:

> I can tell you exactly the schools that will do well in events are the ones whose heads have got it right; for example, I can name X Primary School, got a new head, so into sport it's untrue. They've just won the hockey, they've just taken part in every event this year; never taken part in it before and that's because the head's come along. (SL8)

Where the head teachers themselves were interested in sport and PE, it was thought likely that the subject would have a higher profile in school: "He enjoys sport and likes to promote it as much as possible in the school with teams and with clubs as well" (SL32). The head teacher's interests were also thought to influence the amount of time dedicated to the subject. One SL noted that in their school; "It's two hours all the way through" (SL18) and that; "Leadership is key, within this setting she has definitely been the driving force to the value of

PE and the control she has over the budget means that she can spend the money on it" (SL18). Finally, it was also recognised that while the head teachers have the authority to determine priorities, to invest money and resources, and to insist that PE was taught; there are also limits to this influence. The power they have is significant, but they also need the support of others within the school to affect change: "I think heads set the tone in school, in the culture, priorities, so yes they can influence that. But, they also need people across the school because you can't do it from inside an office" (SL20). This was a clear theme that emerged from SLs; that for PE to be successful the head teacher needed to provide it with a level of status, but that there also needs to be a few key individuals who share the same beliefs:

> I know of a school that was at every competition, that person who was leading that sport has moved to another school and now funnily enough the school that that person has gone to is now at every competition; so it really does rely on a member, two members, three members of staff including the head to be proactive in wanting sport. (SL21)

The head teacher was seen, by SLs, to be a primary factor in determining the status of PE at a school level. Given that PE, like other foundation subjects, was not subject to the pressures of external assessment, the extent to which teachers engaged with PE was thought to be influenced by the ethos that was established in the school network by the head teacher (Elliot et al, 2013). Figurational sociology emphasises that human beings are bonded together in social networks and that relationships between all individuals and groups in these networks inherently involve aspects of power. The power in these relationships may take different forms, but there is always a balance of power which fluctuates and changes over time (Van Krieken, 1998). Within a hierarchical school setting, teachers may exert some influence and control, but the balance of power is with the head teacher. The head has greatest control over resources and is largely able to prioritise areas of the curriculum, based on what they believe is important for the children in their care (Rainer et al, 2012). The powerful position of the

head teacher was attributed by Ball (2007) to developments in the wider context or figuration of primary PE, where the neo-liberal policies of recent decades which have given them greater autonomy in deciding how resources are used to 'compete' with other schools in the education 'market'. This development appears to have shifted the balance of power towards head teachers and correspondingly away from PE SLs.

Where head teachers' valued PE and school sport, they were able to invest more time and resources into the subject and use their position to enable or constrain the actions of others within the school figuration. This power was, according to SLs, used by some head teachers to insist that all staff taught the expected two lessons a week, but the most frequently cited examples were seen in relation to extracurricular school sport. Where head teachers supported the subject, teachers were permitted and encouraged to attend more competitions and festivals; and, as they were willing to invest more time and resources, these head teachers were also thought to bring greater sporting success. The head teachers were considered to have significant authority, but to also need a few other teachers to share their ethos and commitment to PE, as the head teachers themselves could not act out change from behind a desk. This reflects the understanding of figurational sociologists, who recognise that no one has absolute power, there is always reliance on others (Van Krieken, 1998).

Conclusion

In summary, a range of factors have contributed directly or indirectly to the comparatively low status of PE. Neo-liberal education policies brought the introduction of testing and league tables for the core subjects, which led to their prioritization by the broader teaching profession. Core subjects dominate primary timetables, secure the majority of training time within ITE and are the main focus of Ofsted school inspections. PE is relegated to a second

tier of foundation subjects where the specific and unique challenges associated with teaching PE, along with the typically limited sporting capital and training of generalist teachers, means that it is often avoided or even handed over to sports coaches. Head teachers do have the power to influence the status of PE at a local level, but employing sports coaches (who are not qualified teachers) to teach PE does reinforce the status hierarchy of subjects. The habitus of newly qualified teachers is also influenced by the established norms of the school network as they come to learn the values and behaviours that are associated with their social group. Where primary teachers enter the profession with little motivation towards PE, and see the hierarchical status of subjects being endorsed by the beliefs and actions of more experienced (and more powerful) colleagues, their own hegemonic ideology is confirmed – with PE firmly established at the lower end of the status hierarchy of subjects.

PE SLs' perceptions of extracurricular school sport

Having examined SLs thoughts on the value and status of PE as a curricular subject, the second section of this chapter will continue with an analysis of extracurricular school sport. More specifically, the final section will examine the staffing and organisation of extracurricular sport in primary schools. It will identify who leads after school sports clubs and analyse why this is the case. It will also examine how extracurricular provision is paid for and the link between this and the participation of children from different catchment areas. Finally, this section will conclude by analysing the status of extracurricular sport and how this relates to the behaviour and beliefs of the SLs.

Who leads extracurricular sports clubs?

The response of SLs to their involvement in extracurricular sport showed that most enjoyed and valued this part of their role. SLs viewed their extracurricular work as being worthwhile:

"I'd be doing it anyway if I wasn't SL because it's really important I think, it's something that you know, children need these opportunities, definitely; so I'd be doing it anyway" (SL14). It was also seen by SLs as an opportunity to enjoy working with the children that shared their own enthusiasm for sport: "We do enjoy the afterschool clubs and the kids that are in those clubs want to be there as well so it's a pleasure really, you know" (SL17).

When SLs were asked about the organisation of PE beyond the curriculum it was clear that teachers and additional adults were commonly used in all schools to lead and support extracurricular clubs. The additional adults in this context were typically qualified and professional sports coaches, but extracurricular clubs were also supported by adults such as teaching assistants, parent helpers or work experience students; who may or may not have had coaching qualifications. The sports coaches themselves were typically contracted by the school to lead a bloc of after school sessions but may also have been working on an ad hoc or voluntary basis, delivering one off or free taster sessions for children. As such, the staffing of extracurricular sport was characterised by a varied and changing pattern of provision, but in the main a combination of teachers and external coaches were used in schools to lead after school clubs:

> If there's anything free, we get that in but otherwise we get coaches in to do some of the clubs because I don't have time to do all the clubs. I always say I could do with more help. We do have a few other [teachers] that help; there's allsorts goes on. (SL7)

While the staffing of extracurricular provision included a number of different adults who were working in different capacities with different levels of qualification, it was thought by two fifths (40%) of SLs that sports coaches were increasingly being given this responsibility: "teachers used to run it more" (SL13); "When I first started, after school clubs were teachers

and teaching assistants volunteering to do things; now what I see in schools is most schools run after school clubs and have coaches coming in" (SL22).

The change towards the use of sports coaches was attributed by SLs to the demands made on teachers: "You know the hardest part at the moment is the staff finding the time to do it, it is really difficult" (SL6). As such, coaches were being used to alleviate some of the workload or expectations placed on the teaching staff: "Every member of staff in our school did a club last year but I think it got brought up that teachers had a lot of other things to kind of do as well, so TA's do one now and we use a lot of coaches" (SL4). The contribution of coaches to this provision meant that their involvement was accepted by the PE SLs. The sports coaches were perceived to be alleviating the demands made on them and their peers: "we've obviously got lots of things to do after school so it does take the weight off the shoulders" (SL13). For SLs, the priority was about using any available staff (be they teachers, coaches or teaching assistants) to extend extracurricular opportunities for children: "as a PE subject leader you're looking for after school clubs, you'll take whatever people are offering" (SL27). On the whole it would seem that the role of coaches in extracurricular sport was not contested in the same way as their involvement in lessons, in fact their use was welcomed as it alleviated the pressure on teachers and provided opportunities for children: "coaches coming in [to after school clubs] has got to be good for sport, because the quality of what's being done is better and more children are doing it than maybe were doing it in the past" (SL23).

The recent direction of the Government's policy has reinforced the position of sport within PE (Jung, Pope & Kirk, 2015; Kirk, 2010; Ward, 2013) and the need for more extracurricular competition at primary schools (DfE, 2012a). With the various demands made on teachers, this need is increasingly being met through the employment of sports coaches and has led to

their widespread use during extracurricular PE (Smith, 2013). The use of sports coaches to provide extracurricular sport was not contested in the same way as their inclusion in PE lessons. The SLs accepted the outsourcing of extracurricular clubs as they valued the increased opportunities for sports participation and success that their schools could offer through this arrangement. In almost all settings the coaches combined with teachers to extend provision and, as such, they were perceived, by the SLs, to be adding to a valuable service rather than encroaching on the work of teachers. The use of coaches was also accepted within the school network as the extended level of provision, and with it the potential for greater sporting success, was seen as a means of promoting the school in the educational marketplace. According to the SLs, teachers recognised that the availability of more extracurricular clubs is valued by parents and that their increasing desire to advantage their children through sport (Evans & Davies, 2010) could be exploited as a marketing tool. As such, the marketization of education has created a relatively open market for coaches (Griggs, 2010; Rainer et al, 2012; Wilkinson and Penney, 2014) particularly as the heavy workload placed on teachers (Griggs, 2010) has increasingly limited their contribution to this part of school life.

Who pays for extracurricular sports clubs?

The use of coaches to support an extra-curricular programme does seemingly alleviate some time and work pressures for teachers, but it also raises the issue of how this provision is paid for. In around two thirds of schools (62%) where coaches were used in this capacity, the cost is passed on to parents who are asked to pay for any additional clubs beyond those that are provided by the teaching staff: "Yeah the parents pay for that. Any clubs that we provide, that are done by staff, are free and any that are done by an external provider they pay for" (SL18). The discrepancy in the payment of coaches, but not teachers, for essentially the same

provision was noted by a small number of SLs: “The parents pay for those coaches and they charge their own prices...and we the staff don’t get paid for it; quite ironic, isn’t it?” (SL5). This arrangement was accepted by the vast majority of SLs, however, as simply being the established practice within schools.

Over a third (38%) of the SLs explained that the cost of coaches is subsidised by the school. Parents were usually expected to make a contribution towards the cost of extracurricular clubs that are run by external coaches, but the school also paid for this provision: “The children pay so much but we have a subsidy system, it’s about 45% off the price of a club and we subsidise the rest” (SL3). The aim of this policy was to ensure that the cost was not prohibitive and that families could still afford for their children to take part. This was illustrated by one SL who recognised that the; “school contributes quite a lot; I think the children get charged 50p a session…in other schools they charge for clubs and you would get away with that, but they just wouldn’t come here” (SL4). In a couple of schools the subsidy system was extended further, with some places being fully funded and provided free of charge. The aim again being to help children whose families would otherwise not be able to afford for them to attend: “If we’re paying for spare places we can say to parents that we have a space in this club, it would benefit your child; we will give you a free place. So hopefully the children that really need it are getting something out of it” (SL3).

The approach taken by schools to funding externally provided extracurricular clubs varied in relation to the affluence and social class of the families in their catchment area. Of the schools that made a contribution towards the cost of coaches, be it in part or in full, almost all were from more socially deprived areas. Where schools contributed to the cost of extra-curricular provision the average percentage of children on free school meals was 31.6%;

while in contrast the average was 4.9% in those schools that ask instead for parents to pay in full.

The first-hand experience of SLs meant that they had a clear understanding of how participation in extracurricular clubs fluctuated in relation to the cost. One stated that; "We've asked the children to pay fifteen pounds for ten week sessions - so we haven't really had a great response this term" (SL30). While another noted that; "There will be children who won't be coming to cricket in the summer because their parents don't have forty two pounds, and I absolutely understand that" (SL32).

The relationship between social class and participation in physical activity was recognised by SLs regardless of the nature of their school catchment. In more affluent settings it was appreciated that parents were willing and could afford to pay for the cost of coaches: "You know, because the kind of area we're in I suppose parents are quite happy to pay a little bit extra" (SL6). In other areas it was understood that some families would find the cost prohibitive:

> They are going to do some before and after school and lunchtime clubs for us but you have to pay, £2 for a lunchtime one which will be 20 minutes, half an hour and £3.50 for an after school one for an hour, and not everybody will want to pay that so, so I think that's it really. (SL12)

The response of SLs to the relationship between cost and participation in extracurricular clubs varied. A few were less anxious and saw an element of additional cost as being an inevitable outcome of extending provision: "...it was a wish of the parents that they wanted us to have a range of clubs that matched, you know, to other schools in the area and realistically if they want that kind of provision then some of it has to be paid for..." (SL18).

The majority of teachers however, reflected a more general concern; to include and provide opportunities for all children. SLs commonly referred to the school policy on subsidising the cost of coaches or outlined their own approach of complimenting the paid for clubs offered by coaches, with free provision through the teaching staff. One stated that; "...we feel that we give enough other clubs that they're not excluded" (SL28). This approach wasn't only seen in the more deprived settings. One SL in a school where only 2.4% of children are eligible for free school meals claimed that; "...it does work with us because we've got wealthy parents, haven't we? Although I'm sure it grates on them, but they do get a mix here because we all run clubs and they're free of course" (SL5).

In a few circumstances individual teachers took on the responsibility for overcoming the cost of participation themselves. They recognised that by attending training themselves and then making the commitment to run a club, that they could save money for parents and secure a greater level of participation for children. One in particular noted that; "...it's after Christmas, asking them to pay £15 upfront and parents just don't have the funding and then the dodge-ball, tag rugby we had to cancel, so then this is why I'm going on a course because then I can do it free, you know…" (SL13). The willingness of teachers to make such a commitment did not necessarily correlate with schools in the most socially deprived areas. In these settings the pressure on staff to act in this way was to a greater or lesser extent obviated by the funding of sports coaches. This was more a personal response of individual teachers to a need that they recognised within their own schools.

The use of coaches to enhance the extracurricular timetable was accepted within primary school networks, but the custom of employing coaches in this way did lead to issues relating to their payment. In around two thirds of the schools, the cost of coaches was simply passed

directly on to parents; who were asked to pay for any additional clubs beyond those that were provided by the teaching staff. In the other third of schools a subsidised approach had been adopted, whereby the school paid, in part or full, for the cost of externally provided clubs.

The movement of the responsibility for extracurricular sport, away from teachers and towards coaches, is seen by Ball (2007) as a form of educational privatization, where a previously public responsibility has become a privately 'owned' business. Extracurricular sport has traditionally been provided by teachers, for free, as part of their role within schools, but is now increasingly outsourced to commercial coaching companies. Outsourcing is described by Williams and MacDonald (2015, p.58) as a 'complex, often controversial, and increasingly pervasive practice'. In the arrangements outlined by SLs, extracurricular sport is seen as a commodity, in the sense that it must be bought and paid for by parents and/or the schools. The corollary of this change in practice is that children's access to outsourced sports clubs will increasingly be determined by school and family budgets (Williams, Hay & MacDonald, 2011).

The relationship between social class and participation in physical activity was recognised by SLs and was evident in their first-hand experience of how pupil participation in extracurricular clubs fluctuated in relation to the cost. Coaches that charged parents higher prices invariably had a poor response, with less children attending. The schools in more socially deprived areas, whose parents were not able to pay, assumed responsibility for enabling participation by subsidising the provision of clubs; but the extent to which they were able to do so was constrained by the school budget. It would seem that the social and economic circumstances of parents and schools did determine the extent of access, with the more affluent having a wider range and number of clubs available for their children (Evans &

Davies, 2010). The experiences of SLs would seemingly confirm that the acceptance and extension of the outsourcing of extracurricular school sport will widen the inequalities that already exist in relation to sports participation (Smith, 2013). The shift towards the use of coaches appears to reinforce the class gradient effect in the PE and sporting experiences of primary aged children.

The response of SLs to the relationship between cost and participation in extracurricular clubs varied. Some showed acceptance of free market ideologies as they perceived the added costs to be an inevitable outcome of extended provision; if parents wanted the school to provide additional opportunities, then it was only right that they should be willing to pay for them. Most SLs, however, were concerned by, and wanted to help remove, any barriers to participation based on social class. In the main this meant that they aimed to ensure that there was sufficient parallel and free provision through teachers, to compliment the paid for clubs ran by coaches. In a few individual circumstances SLs took on greater responsibility by undertaking training that would enable them to offer the same activity as external providers and in doing so, save parents the cost of paying a coach. The willingness of teachers to make such a commitment did not correlate closely with schools in the most socially deprived areas. It was an individual response to a need that they recognised within their own school network.

The status of extracurricular sport

Having examined the views of SLs on the use of coaches in an extracurricular capacity, and the cost implications of this practice, this chapter will conclude by analysing the state and status of extracurricular sport within primary school PE.

Primary school teachers were thought by SLs to value extracurricular sport as they wanted to support and promote both the success of individual pupils and also the standing of the school within the community: “I think staff are really interested. Children bring in their trophies or medals, you know, stand up in assembly and show them” (SL6). Teachers who may have been more ambivalent towards curriculum time PE supported extracurricular achievements as they recognised the impact of sporting success on the children: “Our netball team is very successful so...we might not be good at everything but we will be good at sport, so we are good, we are the best at something and that perks the kids up as well” (SL1). Not only were teachers interested in the successes of pupils, they were also thought to value sport as a means of promoting the profile of the school within the community: “[Teachers] see the value of it...from a bigger picture, as in it’s a good marketing tool as well” (SL16).

Extracurricular sport was thought by SLs to have a relatively high status across the 36 primary schools as while staff may or may not have been directly involved in running clubs and teams, they were still perceived to value the impact of sporting success on the school as a whole. The importance of sporting success was also reflected in the behaviour and beliefs of the SLs themselves. More specifically it began to dictate how they prepared for more important competitions, how they selected teams and finally how they dealt with some of the issues which arose from competition.

Preparation for competition

The importance placed on sporting success was evident in the approach taken by SLs in preparation for more significant competitions. The PE timetable was often adapted to allow for additional preparation time, with the extracurricular fixtures dictating the content of the PE curriculum: “This year we’ve tried to base when we do things in the curriculum around

when the events are" (SL3). The organisation of the PE curriculum in this way was, to a greater or lesser extent, seen by SLs as being common practice, but was more obvious when schools are thought to have a realistic chance of winning: "I like to go to the tournament when they've already played rugby in lessons, they know what they're doing and they've got a decent chance of winning" (SL25).

While SLs often manipulated the timetable to allow for more practice time, schools also invested in sporting success by similarly organising the extracurricular programme around the timings of interschool tournaments. This meant that schools either paid for additional coaching: "we've paid extra for a coach to come in and do sessions outside of the PE lessons" (SL3), or teachers devoted more time to team practices: "People put on sports and practices and things for children because they know there's a tournament coming up" (SL27). The extent to which this approach was adopted was thought by the SLs to vary depending on the potential for the team to do well. The amount of time put into practice; "...depends on whether you have a fighting chance, you know?" (SL15).

Team selection

The status of extracurricular sport was seen to impact on the way in which SLs prepared for competitions; particularly when there was a "chance of winning". It was also evident in the way that SLs responded to the dilemma of team selection. Some clearly prioritised winning and chose the more able players, despite realising that others were equally keen and deserving of the opportunity to take part. The justification for this was that the more able children ought to have their opportunity to excel:

> Somehow I do think there is a stigma about being the best at sport and that sometimes that can be perceived quite negatively....but for some children that's their thing, that's what they excel at, that's their deal. And they should be allowed, you know they sit in

> maths lessons every week with people excelling in maths, then they do music and somebody else excels at music and somebody else is a fantastic artist, somebody else sings beautifully; and sport is their thing and so I think they should be allowed. (SL32)

The focus on being competitive and aiming to win was clearly embraced by some of the SLs, with one stating that "you send your best players and they've got to be committed to coming to the training, that's the difference" (SL18). While some SLs were inherently more competitive and always chose their best players, this approach had on occasion led to conflict with parents over team selection:

> You know, different schools have different approaches to it. I mean when I came here it was kind of like you picked names out of a hat and that was your team. Well sorry, you take your best team and that took a long time to get through because you'd have parents arrive in your classroom saying, 'Why is my son so and so not in the team?' (SL15)

While a more competitive stance was adopted by some, the other approach was for team selection to be governed by an ethos of equal opportunity. In these settings teachers were concerned to share what was seen to be the positive experience of representing the school:

> You can see the pride that the children take when you take them to competitions and we try really hard to make sure that everybody, particularly in year 6 has done a sporting event and we've invested some money in the sports kit and that the fact that they go and they wear the kit and they're a team and it's really good for them. (SL18)

The argument that followed this approach was that at primary school level, competition was essentially about participation and the welfare of the children, and not about winning:

> ...are primary schools there for getting kids a chance to try these sports or are we meant to be breeding winners? I would say that the clubs are meant to be breeding winners; we want to get kids out to go and do the clubs; but it doesn't matter whether they win or lose at primary school, it's whether they get involved, try as many different sports as possible. (SL16)

In a few circumstances this equal opportunity ethos was well established and would always be adhered to; “we will go for trying to take everybody; there’s even been points where we’ve lost games because it was a choice of involving somebody” (SL16).

The selection of teams for interschool competitions did provide an insight into the ethos of different SLs. While there were a few who were more entrenched in their [more extreme] views, the most common approach was to try and accommodate both positions: “It’s not always about the competition, sometimes it’s about just participation because there’s that other thing that it’s not always necessarily the great kids that get chosen. That we try and make sure that its opportunities for everybody as well” (SL9). As with the time and effort put into team preparation, the approach taken with team selection was again seen to vary with the significance of the contest:

> I try to mix it up so that we have some matches that are fairly competitive, where we put a team out and you try to do as well as you can; and there’s some [friendly] matches where you think ‘well we will have a bit of a mix here’. (SL32)

Overall, most PE SLs did try to accommodate both positions so that all children were included. However, the status of the competition itself and the possibility of winning did dictate the behaviour of the SLs, as the more able children were selected for more important fixtures, especially where the team had a good chance of success.

Issues relating to competition

The status of extracurricular sport and the inherent competitiveness of some SLs were apparent in the way that they prepared and selected their teams; especially for more prestigious tournaments. It also led to further issues around the notion of fair and balanced competition, with the different values of SLs leading to some conflict between staff:

> I did say to the teacher afterwards, 'Is this really in the spirit of what we're trying to encourage these kids to do' and she said, 'What, win?' and I was like yeah, that is important but surely you want these kids to grow up and carry this on for the rest of their lives and enjoy doing it. (SL19)

The tendency of some teachers to overemphasise the value of winning was seen to place an unhealthy burden on young children: "She is old school and she's very good at what she does, but there's a lot of pressure put on them" (SL28). The seemingly exaggerated value that some SLs placed on winning was typified by a description of one athletics meeting:

> You go to these athletic meetings and stuff, it's just horrendous; they're drilled these kids, there's no fun. They moan if the kids don't come first, you know...this kid did a false start and the whole school was there and went, 'Urgh' and the kid was, you know, it was like this outcast. (SL19)

In other settings, the selection of weaker teams, with little preparation time was thought to be equally detrimental. In this circumstance SLs were attending competitions knowing that they would lose: "...their children were achieving and attaining much higher than we were, and we just knew if we were turning up, we'd lost because there was no chance for us…" (SL3). This again was thought to be problematic for young children starting in sport: "The schools that go down the participation 'fair' route in selecting teams tend to lose heavily and get demoralised" (SL35). In some situations this could lead to some quite difficult experiences:

> Last year I entered them in the football tournament, the premiership...and they lost every match. By the end I was really having difficulty to get children to say yes they would come. They didn't want to come because they were just going to lose. (SL29)

These experiences were a source of concern for teachers as they do want the children to enjoy taking part. In some tournaments the management of the competition was thought to be more sympathetic: "I loved, when we went to the diamond cricket festival, very positive for children, they were joining in, getting certificates, they were not made to feel that they're the

losers" (SL27). Other SLs noted the value of well-matched competition: "...the schools have been at a similar level and the competition has been more interesting, it's been closer and the children have enjoyed going more, so it's been beneficial for us" (SL3). While another SL similarly noted that it; "became a really positive experience for them, those mini kickers events are great, they won a couple but they did lose a few too" (SL26).

In most instances extracurricular sport is portrayed by SLs as a positive aspect of primary school PE: "If they're well matched and its run well then it's a very enriching experience for children" (SL29). In some cases it is apparent, however, that issues arise for SLs from, what appears to be, a misalignment of the ethos and values that underpin sport and PE. Given the relative status of the former, this can lead to more serious approaches being adopted by SLs in relation to team preparation and selection, and at times (what is seen by some to be) a disproportionate value being placed on winning.

The running of extracurricular clubs is a largely voluntary aspect of school life where teachers are typically able to choose what, if anything, they want to offer (Armour, 2006; Elliot et al, 2013). The data from this study showed that PE SLs were characteristically motivated to engage with this provision. They may have been influenced by the expectations of the networks that they belonged to, but they were drawn by the prospect of working in their preferred area, with the children who were more able and enthusiastic in relation to school sport. This ironically allowed them to act as coaches, as they were attracted to the conditions normally associated with this profession; namely, of working towards a narrower range of sport based outcomes with a smaller group of more able children (Blair & Capel, 2011). This pointed to the significance of the habitus of the SLs and the perception that their

role in PE was about providing more extracurricular sport for the more able pupils (Bowles & O'Sullivan, 2012).

The habitus of SLs was evident in their behaviour and in the relative importance that they attributed to extracurricular school sport. In the first instance the organisation of the PE timetable was often manipulated by the SLs to coincide with major extracurricular tournaments and competitions. This was done to allow more time for more practice in that particular sport. In effect, PE lessons often became team training sessions designed to prepare children for extracurricular competitions. Second, the employment of sports coaches in extracurricular PE was approached in a similarly manner so that the specialist expertise that they were thought to offer (Blair & Capel, 2011) was used strategically to provide additional pre-competition training for the school team. Finally, some SLs selected their school team on the exclusive criteria of choosing the more able children with the aim of winning, rather than having a more inclusive approach that afforded more pupils the opportunity of taking part. Most SLs were aware of, and made efforts to accommodate, both ideological positions. They commonly looked for example, to target some tournaments where they would take their best players and aim to win, while for other competitions they would adopt a more inclusive stance and try to involve a wider range of children. Nonetheless, the differing perceptions held by SLs on the 'right approach' to take did lead to some less desirable aspects emerging. As such, unbalanced competition, an unhealthy pressure to win and children being demoralised through the experience of losing heavily, were all thought to be features of extracurricular sport.

The habitus of SLs will have been formed by their own early experiences of networks that predisposed them towards sport. These early experiences were thought to be particularly

important in shaping the values and beliefs of the SLs towards PE and sport, but they would also have been influenced by their on-going involvement in more complex figurations (Green, 2014). PE SLs are involved in lengthening chains of interdependence with sporting individuals and organisations that are likely to have reinforced the value of competition. It is perhaps not surprising then, that when given a reasonably large school of sufficiently capable pupils, SLs embraced the opportunity and adopted more competitive practice. However, SLs are also influenced by the values of their profession and the educational figurations that they are part of (Elliot et al, 2013). The impact of working in a primary school is likely to lead them to a more holistic concern for the physical, personal and social development of all pupils (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012). For the most part SLs succeeded in negotiating these at times quite contrasting influences and were able to adopt practices that are compatible with the values of both education and sport. The chance of success in more prestigious competitions did, however, challenge some SLs who became preoccupied with winning and adopted practices that other SLs considered inappropriate.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the high profile of extracurricular sport as a means of promoting the school within the education marketplace does add to the expectation for SLs to provide a wide range of extracurricular opportunities. Sports coaches are seen to be helpful in this regard as they can extend provision, particularly when the burden placed on teachers is perceived to limit their capacity to contribute. The involvement of coaches is generally welcomed within the school figuration, but it also raises issues about the impact of outsourcing on participation, particularly in more socially deprived areas.

The involvement of coaches in the school figuration also reinforces the centrality of sport within primary PE and supports the continued emphasis on more competition. This can create a tension within primary PE and school sport as the emphasis on competition seemingly imposes adult activities and adult values on young children. Put simply, the play based values associated with primary PE, of freedom, inclusion, creativity and enjoyment, seemingly clash with the more serious, focussed and competitive approach of sport (Wright, 2004).

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

The central aims of this thesis were to describe and explain the nature and practice of primary PE in one School Sport Partnership in the north-west of England. A case study research strategy was adopted as a means of interrogating primary PE and creating a detailed description from the perspective of the participants – in this case the primary teachers involved in leading the subject. The SLs, with their expertise and direct involvement in leading the subject, were particularly well placed within the social network of the partnership to provide an insight into the nature and practice of primary PE.

A number of interrelated sociological concepts, that together inform the figurational perspective, were adopted in the study. Thus, while the research strategy was centred on the use of qualitative methods, the overall approach to the research was shaped by the theoretical framework of figurational sociology. Elias (1978) noted that we only exist in and through our relationships with others and that in order to understand social behaviour it is necessary for its study to be within the context of these networks of interdependent relationships (or figurations). Human action is, he maintained, shaped by a person's habitus, which is socially constructed within figurations, through our everyday experiences of our relationships with others (Van Krieken, 1998). The outcome of this human action is, however, often unplanned and unintended as it also occurs within complex networks where power relationships shift and develop over time. Thus, by analysing primary PE in terms of the complex networks that SLs and teachers are, and have been, a part of, it was thought possible to develop a more adequate understanding of the impact of interdependent relationships, habitus, unintended outcomes and power balances on the development of the subject over time. More specifically,

in adopting and applying these key figurational concepts to the sociological analysis of primary PE, it was hoped to test the propositions put forward in the two hypotheses:

1. That the staffing models and teaching approaches used to teach PE in primary schools, along with the content of lessons, will be varied.
2. That the variable nature and practice of the subject will be best explained by the figurations which primary PE teachers belong to.

In relation to the first hypothesis, the staffing models used to teach primary PE do vary, with different combinations of generalist class teachers, specialist PE teachers and sports coaches being used to deliver the subject. Over half of the PE lessons taught in the 36 schools were, however, estimated to have involved a sports coach. This was seen to be a contentious development as the use of commercial companies to supply coaches represents the expansion of 'outsourcing' within primary PE (Williams & MacDonald, 2015) and seemingly undermines the status of PE in the primary curriculum. The employment of sports coaches to teach primary PE lessons brought concerns about what might broadly be termed their educational suitability and viability, but there were good economic and pragmatic reasons for their use. Sports coaches were cheaper and their employment dealt with the reluctance and inability of many generalist teachers to deliver PE lessons. Whatever the pros and cons of the evident shift towards greater use of sports coaches in curricular as well as extracurricular PE (Smith, 2013), the current context appears only likely to exacerbate matters. Directly or indirectly, the SLs in this study outlined a scenario in which a shift towards sports coaches and away from generalist class teachers and, albeit to a lesser extent, specialist PE SLs was well underway. In light of the (perhaps inevitable) failure of teacher training to address many of the inherent weaknesses in primary generalist teachers' capacity to deliver PE, the seeming

desire (for a variety of perfectly understandable reasons) of generalist teachers to avoid teaching PE is likely to continue. Such predispositions are evidently made easier by the fact that, in the form of sports coaches, schools have a seemingly ideal 'reserve army of [relatively cheap] surplus ['expert'] labour'. The apparent 'threat' to the status of PE in the primary curriculum (as well as the status of PE specialists) ostensibly posed by the growth of coaches in curricular PE in primary schools may also be exacerbated by the primary *PE and Sport Premium*. According to the recent DfE (2014) survey of uses of the Premium in England, around two-thirds (70%) of primary schools reported making changes to the staffing of curricular PE lessons, with four-fifths of these claiming to have made greater use of external sport coaches. Thus, the Premium appears to be adding impetus to a change, even transformation, in the staffing of primary PE.

The teaching approaches used to deliver primary PE also varied. Planning and assessment in PE were influenced by the accepted customs and practice of the school network, with established weaknesses in the latter being confirmed by the current study. The pedagogical approaches adopted in lessons did include, according to SLs, some inclusive and developmentally appropriate methods, but the overriding focus was on didactic teaching approaches being used to achieve narrow skills based outcomes. The historical dominance of games, the limited impact of ITE and the conflation of sport with PE were all thought to have influenced the adoption of a teaching model that was unduly influenced by sport. It was also clear from SLs responses, that the prevalence of teaching methods that bind didactic and skill based pedagogy are unlikely to be challenged by the greater inclusion of sports coaches within primary PE. In short, the portents of a future with sports coaches as the main deliverers of primary 'sport' lessons are there for all to see.

Finally, the content of primary PE lessons was also shown to vary, with a clear discrepancy between official figures and what actually happens in schools. Government announcements over the last ten years have painted an increasingly optimistic picture of participation levels, but the findings from this study show that while two lessons were allocated to PE each week, school timetables are far from being an accurate representation of what is actually taught. The cancelling of PE lessons was seen as regrettable, but on the whole accepted as common-place and legitimate practice. Of the lessons that were taught, SLs confirmed that games activities dominated. Sport and traditional team games were shown to occupy a privileged position on the PE timetable, but were also shown to be organised around the timings of the major inter-school competitions and tournaments. In this regard the extracurricular timetable often dictated the timing and content of PE lessons. A further anomaly noted in the content of PE lessons, related to the organisation of swimming. A small number of head teachers were seemingly able to ignore the requirements of the national curriculum and end the school's commitment to swimming lessons. The schools which offered no swimming lessons were marked by their relative affluence and were part of a pattern of provision that seemingly linked the time devoted to school swimming lessons with the social class of the catchment area.

In relation to the second hypothesis, the figurations, or networks of interdependent relationships, which teachers have and do belong to were shown to influence the nature and practice of primary PE. It was argued that the habitus of SLs, shaped through their early experiences within their figurations of family and friends, typically led to a high level of interest or ability in the subject. In contrast generalist teachers had very different experiences, which typically meant that they were less competent and enthusiastic about PE and did not value the subject in the same way. The experience of ITE was shown to do little to change the

habitus of teachers as PE provision, for generalist at least, was thought to be insufficient (Blair & Capel, 2011). As such, generalists started their teaching careers with minimal training in PE and were quickly subsumed in a school network which typically confirmed their previously established beliefs about the limited value of the subject (Elliot et al, 2013).

The different figurations which SLs and generalists teachers had been a part of as children were shown to be instrumental in shaping their habitus toward PE. The networks which they were a part of as teachers within schools was also thought to confirm and entrench their previously held beliefs about the value and status of the subject. Generalist classroom teachers work, it was argued, in a social network of a primary school where their practice is largely constrained by a focus on the core subjects. The introduction of competition into education, through neo-liberal policies (which promote parental choice based on a review of a school's performance in league tables), has brought a disproportionate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science (Ball, 2007). Head teachers have been given increasing responsibility (and power) for school success and prioritise academic learning in these areas; which elevates their status, but leaves PE in the lower tier of less important subjects (Griggs, 2010). The lowly position of PE in the hierarchy of subjects means that less enthusiast teachers are able to devote less time and effort to the subject.

PE SLs are also part of a school network that prioritises core subjects, but at the same time were shown to be working in lengthening chains of interdependence with increasingly powerful sporting organisations (Smith, 2013). Recent policies have prioritised the role of competitive sport within primary PE, with significant investment being made in the provision of more extracurricular opportunities for more children. One outcome of this approach is that primary SLs belong to a sporting figuration that have at different times, and to different

extents, included secondary school PE teachers, SSCos, governing bodies of sport and sports coaches. The same policies have also tended to conflate the terms PE and school sport, meaning that they are often used interchangeably and that the two aspects are increasingly regarded as being one and the same (Griggs, 2010).

The outcome of these, and other social processes, is that generalist teachers value, and are influenced by the prioritisation of, core subjects; while SLs are also influenced, but by the relatively powerful position of sport. As such, the status of PE, as a supposedly valuable educational activity in its own right, was thought to be compromised by the priorities of the different networks to which generalists and SLs belong.

The low status of PE was shown in the declining time for the subject within ITE and in the limited availability of CPD. It was seen in the ambivalence towards longstanding weaknesses in teachers' assessment of primary PE and in the infrequent monitoring of the subject through peer observation. It was also evident in generalists' low regard for the subject, their willingness to cancel or hand over lessons to sports coaches and to generally view PE as being expendable. In contrast, the high profile of sport was evident in government policies and in head teachers' employment of more sports coaches to provide more extracurricular clubs. It was seen in the content of a PE timetable shaped by sport, in particular team games, and the organisation of the curriculum around tournaments; so that lessons became team training sessions. It was also shown in the didactic, skill based approaches adopted by teachers and in the sporting values that they attributed to PE.

It is argued that there are several reasons which underlie and explain the nature and practice of primary PE, but that the involvement of teachers in different social networks is an

instrumental part of what is seen to be a long term process of continuity and change. The established status of primary PE as a supposedly unique and educationally valuable area of the curriculum, that can enrich the learning of all children, is seemingly being challenged by the contrasting priorities of the different figurations which teachers of primary PE belong to.

Given the main findings of the study, the thesis will conclude with some recommendations as to the nature of future research in primary PE and suggestions relating to the direction of future policy.

Policy implications of findings

While it must be acknowledged that, a range of issues beyond the control of policy makers enable and constrain the impact of policy, and that the desired effect of policy is rarely realised in the way intended, the final section will consider some of the implications of the findings in the thesis. That is not to say that the findings should be enacted in policy, more that any recommendations are based on the present study and are merely suggestions as to what might lead to more positive developments for primary PE.

The announcement of the *PE and Sport Premium* led Sue Wilkinson, the strategic lead of the Association for PE, to state her preference for this money to be invested in the training of generalist classroom teachers (DfE, 2014b). As part of this launch the Government also announced investment in the training of primary PE specialists, with 200 achieving qualified teacher status in the last two years (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2015). More recently the Government has promoted a website, the 'coaching in schools portal', that aims to help head teachers in their recruitment of sports coaches (DfE, 2015). All of these developments highlight the mismatched and even contradictory nature of existing policy and

the lack of consensus in relation to who should teach primary PE. The current approach allows for the three different models to be used in any combination, and according to the findings of this study, for some considerable variation in the quality of lessons. In addition, the lack of clarity brings confusion and contradictory practice. Primary teachers are, for example, still trained, to varying degrees, to teach PE only to find that once they leave ITE that this area of the curriculum is increasingly (and sometimes exclusively) led by sports coaches in schools.

Several authors (such as; Blair & Capel, 2011; Griggs, 2007, 2010; Harris, Cale & Musson, 2012; Tsangaridou, 2012) point to long established weaknesses in the generalist system, and while efforts have been made through CPD to address these issues, the concerns relating to subject knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm still remain. The findings of this study would suggest that the generalist system is inherently flawed as it aims to make competent, knowledgeable and confident primary PE teachers from those whose own experience of PE and sport has left them lacking in those very things. Findings in this study indicate a preference for specialists, be they teachers of coaches. The impact of sports coaches on teaching and learning in primary schools is an area ripe for research. Their involvement is contentious and is shown to be a threat to the status of primary PE and PE specialist teachers. It may be misleading to suggest, however, that the recruitment of sports coaches is tantamount to a de-professionalization of PE; not least because PE in primary schools has long been taught by non-specialist (often unwilling) generalist class teachers. The use of specialist teachers was the favoured approach of those in this study, and has also been endorsed by others within education (Alexander, 2009 Ofsted, 2009), but this approach is not as flexible or as cheap as the use of sports coaches.

Whether the apparent shift towards outsourcing PE to commercial sports coaches is a good or bad thing depends entirely upon what one considers to be the aims and purposes of primary PE. Resolving this issue would help decide whether to adopt a specialist teacher or sports coach model. If PE is about a holistic concern for the physical, social and personal development of all children, about varied child centred teaching approaches and lessons that contribute to cross curricular learning, then those teaching the subject would seemingly need greater expertise and training in education and pedagogy. While conversely, if PE is about a narrower range of outcomes relating to activity levels, skill development and competition, then sports coaches would quite feasibly be well placed to teach the subject. Either way, moving to a specialist model, be it through teachers or coaches, would remove the need for token PE sessions in generalist ITE provision and, more importantly, would begin to address persistent issues relating to teachers' subject knowledge, use of assessment and motivation towards the subject.

Another related finding of the study was that as extracurricular activities are increasingly provided by coaching companies, this is an aspect of school life that needs to be paid for. When this cost is passed onto parents there is an obvious effect on participation as it excludes children from poorer families. Schools are using the money from the *PE and Sport Premium* to subsidise or pay for coaches in full, to absolve parents of this expense; but this is more common in schools which are in more deprived areas (Evans & Davies, 2010). The *PE and Sport Premium* has a weighting which accounts for the number of pupils on role, but a similar adjustment to recognise socio economic circumstances (based on FSM) would seem appropriate. At the moment the outsourcing of extracurricular school sport to coaching companies is apparently widening the inequalities that already exist in relation to sports participation (Smith, 2013).

Areas of further research

The findings of this study suggest that further research is needed on the impact of sports coaches on pupil learning within primary PE lessons. Coaches are criticized as they are thought to possess weaker pedagogical skills (Blair & Capel, 2013; Ofsted, 2009; Smith 2013) and that, largely due to their lack of teaching qualifications (Pickup, 2006; Blair & Capel, 2011), they tend to be limited in relation to teaching styles, behaviour management, knowledge of the curriculum and of the children themselves (Griggs, 2008, 2010; Smith, 2013). In this study, however, SLs criticized coaches' by comparing their weaknesses as qualified, 'professional' teachers with an ideal-typical generalist class teacher model rather than the reality – which they themselves had previously criticized. The contentious nature of this area along with its potential impact on the status of PE professionals brings the need for more detached empirical research around the impact of sports coaches, as this would help clarify the direction of future policy.

In a not dissimilar way more extensive research is needed as to the impact and value of primary PE. Much of the current research has focused on the supposed importance and potential of the subject (in the development of movement skills and impact on health) at this age range. It is claimed that 'children's basic movement competence as the foundation for a lifetime of physical activity cannot be left to chance' (Jess, Dewar & Fraser, 2004, p.12) and that a child missing out on appropriate primary PE would be put at a health disadvantage in later life (Ennis, 2011). Investigations into the relationship between basic movements and physical activity participation have supposedly found that the level of basic movement skills significantly predicts the variety, time and intensity of children's on-going involvement in physical activity across their lifespan (Ennis, 2011; Foweather, 2010; Jess & Collins, 2003). However, as Green (2014) points out empirical evidence to support such a 'PE effect' is

deficient and doubt remains as to the value of the subject. Many children share almost exactly the same experience of PE lessons as their classmates, but exit primary education with vastly different abilities and attitudes towards sport and physical activity. Longer term research, that included an evaluation of children's wider sporting experiences within different social networks, would develop a more adequate understanding of the contribution made by PE lessons to children's learning and development.

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Appendix 1

Faculty of Education and Children's Services
University of Chester
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ

Date 2012

Primary School
Village Road
Village
Town
Postcode

Dear Head Teacher

I am currently undertaking a PhD in the Sociology of Primary Physical Education and am writing to ask for your permission to approach your staff regarding a research project. I would like to invite them to participate in research which will form part of my case study on the nature of Primary School Physical Education.

The research will be centred an interview with the subject leader for physical education. The participant would be fully informed of the purpose of the study before hand and can choose for themselves whether they want to take part or not. They would also be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

While the interviews will focus on the views and experiences of the subject leader it must be emphasised that all information would be treated as being strictly confidential and that anonymity would be assured. A debrief would also be available after the research programme has been completed, which may inform future planning and practice within the school.

Thank you for giving this request your consideration. If you are willing, I would ask that you give the enclosed information to the subject leader.

Yours faithfully,

Luke Jones
Senior Lecture and Subject Leader for Physical Education

Appendix 2

Participant information sheet

Variability and Practice in Primary School Physical Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?
This research is being undertaken with the network of professionals responsible for the teaching of primary physical education. The purpose of the study is to develop a more adequate understanding of primary physical education; to find out how it is organised and taught and why this is the case.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen, as the research project will focus on a case study of the Chester School Sport Partnership. As a subject leader of primary physical education you are well placed to make sense of how the subject is taught.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time - without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw or not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?
You will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. This will give your permission for the researcher to contact you and arrange a convenient date for an interview. The interview will take place at your school and you will have the opportunity to discuss in confidence your views and experiences relating to physical education.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no foreseen risks in taking part, the only disadvantage being the demand put on your time. For this reason the interview will be no more than 60 minutes in duration.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
By taking part you will have the opportunity to reflect on your own individual and school practice, and contribute to a study of primary physical education within the partnership. The overall results of this study will be made available to you and you will also be given the opportunity of being debriefed on the outcomes of the final research. All of which may inform your future practice.

What if something goes wrong?
If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact Professor Sarah Andrew, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, 01244 513055.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that only the researcher carrying out the research will have access to such information.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results will be written up into a dissertation for my Phd. Individuals who participate will not be identified in any subsequent report or publication.

Who is organising the research?
The research is conducted as part of a PhD in Primary Physical Education within the Department of Sport and Exercise Science at the University of Chester. The study is organised with supervision from the department, by Luke Jones, a PhD student.

Who may I contact for further information?
If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Luke Jones, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ.
Email: luke.jones@chester.ac.uk Phone: 07763 567686.

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Appendix 3

Faculty of Education and Children's Services
University of Chester
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ

Date 2012

Primary School
Village Road
Village
Town
Postcode

Dear Subject Leader for Physical Education

I am a Senior Lecturer at the University of Chester who is currently undertaking a PhD in the Sociology of Primary Physical Education. I am writing to ask for your participation in a research project that aims to describe and explain the nature of the subject within the primary age phase.

The research will be centred on interviews with the subject leaders of Physical Education. The interview with yourself will take place at your school at a time that is convenient for you and be no more than 60 minutes in duration.

While the interview will focus on your views and experiences of Primary Physical Education it must be stressed that all information will be treated as being strictly confidential and that anonymity would be assured. A debrief would also be available after the research programme has been completed, which may inform future planning and practice within the school.

If you are willing, I would ask that you read the enclosed participant information sheet and return the completed consent form in the envelope provided; so that we can then arrange the interview.

Thank you for giving this request your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Luke Jones
Senior Lecture and Subject Leader for Physical Education

Appendix 4a

University of Chester

Faculty of Applied Sciences
Research Ethics Committee

Tel 01244 511740
Fax 01244 511302
frec@chester.ac.uk

Luke Iwan Jones
Rosedale
Chapel Lane
Hargrave
Chester
CH3 7RR

21st May 2012

Dear Luke,

Study title: **Variability and Practice in Primary School Physical Education.**
FREC reference: **674/12/LJ/SES**
Version number: **1**

Thank you for sending your application to the Faculty of Applied Sciences Research Ethics Committee for review.

I am pleased to confirm ethical approval for the above research, provided that you comply with the conditions set out in the attached document, and adhere to the processes described in your application form and supporting documentation.

The Committee would like to make the following recommendations:-

- Declare how long participant interviews will take in the application form; Letter of Invitation and Participant Information Sheet.

- Clarify if individual subject leader interviews and group interviews will take place.

Please forward a copy of the response to FREC template regarding the above points to

frec@chester.ac.uk

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
Application Form	1	April 2012
Appendix 1 – List of References	1	April 2012
Appendix 2 – C.V. for Lead Researcher	1	April 2012
Appendix 3 – Letter of Invitation to Participants	1	April 2012
Appendix 4 – Participant Information Sheet	1	April 2012
Appendix 5 – Participant Consent Form	1	April 2012
Appendix 6 – Information Sheet	1	April 2012
Appendix 7 – Interview Schedule	1	April 2012
Appendix 8 – C.V. for Supervisor	1	April 2012

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Fallows
Acting Chair, Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Enclosures: Standard conditions of approval.

Cc. Supervisor/FREC Representative

Appendix 4b

University of Chester

Faculty of Applied Sciences
Research Ethics Committee

Tel 01244 511740
Fax 01244 511302
frec@chester.ac.uk

Luke Jones
Rosedale
Chapel Lane
Hargrave
Chester
CH3 7RR

14th June 2012

Dear Luke,

Study title: **Variability and Practice in Primary School Physical Education.**
FREC reference: **674/12/LJ/SES**
Version number: **1**

Thank you for providing the documentation for the amendments recommended following the approval of the above application. These amendments have been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Amended documents (Version 2):-

- Application form
- Appendix 3 – Letter to subject leader and teachers
- Appendix 4 – Participant information Sheet
- Appendix 6 – Letter to Headteacher

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Fallows
Acting Chair, Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 5

Transcription of interview with **SL**

(Initial preamble between LJ and SL, not transcribed)

Interviewer (LJ): So first of all, just to begin with, how many lessons do they have a week here and how long do they last for?

Interviewee (SL): In the infant department we have three timetabled lessons and there; so we have over two hours in the infants timetabled but actually by the time they've got changed, you know, it can come down to just sort of two hours really, realistically.

Interviewer (LJ): So you know, if you've got an hour of PE, how long does the changing bit take?

Interviewee (SL): Well when I used to do it I used to give them three minutes, "Right you've got three minutes to get changed, all those right, bring your clothes, you can come and do the rest in the hall," sort of thing [interviewer laughs].

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): But reception, it takes a lot longer but I believe that you can do that as part of your lesson anyway because of course gross motor and fine motor, putting your socks on is important anyway so that doesn't really matter. Um but probably, five [inaudible] minutes…

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah?

Interviewee (SL): I used to be able to do it, you know, in three minutes for some…

Interviewer (LJ): That's not bad is it [inaudible]

Interviewee (SL): But to be realistic for some it's five, ten minutes. Um, yeah…that's how long it takes. So we have, so in the infants we have a gym lesson planned once a week and we have a games lesson planned once a week and we have a dance lesson planned once a week and the way the year 1; this is key stage 1. The year 1's currently do it whereby they have half an hour sort of dance and music and what they do is they swop over, so a teacher would teach the lesson twice and the other teacher would teach music and then in year 2 they do it whereby they have dance every other week so they have a longer session and the other teacher teaches music and then they swop over. So that's how they do it in key stage 1. Reception; a lot of it is done outside so they don't do it quite as formally with the games and gymnastics and dance; they don't do it like that. Um, a lot of physical activities go on outside and they have outdoor workshop

and things but they do come and have a hall time. And nursery come and have a hall time as well, where they come and do PE; uh, quite often turning on a CD and doing Active Kids or something? I can't remember what; there's a CD that they use…

Interviewer (LJ): Oh yeah?

Interviewee (SL): And listen to instructions and things. And then the juniors [pause] isn't quite, at the moment isn't timetabled as much. I think that they have two lessons timetabled; sticking to it is a different matter. At the moment they've been trying to just do it in the afternoon because of literacy and numeracy in the morning, not wanting to get in the way and because of so much other, I think PE has been pushed out the way a lot. Hall time this term, [inaudible] being used massively for the year 6 play, Christmas its then used, um, for the play and if…yeah it's almost the first thing to go; it is the first thing to go. We have, however, what's been good, is we have had PPA this year taught as PE so at least one lesson for a lot of them has happened and that's been done by a person who's just done PE which has been good. So generally they have it, been timetabled two hours but I don't think realistically it's always done, which is a shame.

Interviewer (LJ): And do you know within the curriculum here, have you got that balance between games, gym and dance...do they prioritise anything?

Interviewee (SL): Realistically? It is supposed to be, no it is supposed to be a balance, obviously you'll be aware of what you're supposed to do, um but they do do, you know, they like doing the outdoor adventurous activities, um, athletics, games; all of the different sorts, you know, netball, field and track, etc., etc. Um…uh, gymnastics and dance, however, dance is in some classes not done; year 6 for example. But they did do it in their play so they've all been doing moves for Greece; they've just been doing Greece so I think that's probably why…a lot of things haven't been done because of SATS this year anyway, not just PE. But generally they do try and get a balance and I have planned for this next year coming to do a balance of gym; gym, dance; I have actually weighted it higher on games now, rightly or wrongly, um but I was trying to be realistic as to what they would teach and also because of all the extra-curricular things that are provided for the children, you know like all the inter-competitions and things; well if you don't do it in the lessons they're not going to be able to go, enter these competitions so in order to fit them in, even if it's just a four week session on tennis, a four week session on basketball…

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **In order to fit them in, so I have, it has been a bit heavily weighted on games I have to say but I also thought if it's raining they could go in and do a gym lesson or something.**

Interviewer (LJ): And what happens with the swimming; how is that provided?

Interviewee (SL): **Currently nine weeks in the whole of their junior career.**

Interviewer (LJ): Right.

Interviewee (SL): **Nine lessons.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **Dreadful; because of the cost.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **Really, really dreadful. Um and I don't know if there is an actual minimum that they're allowed or that they're supposed to do. They used to do more; they used to do it in, they used to do it the whole of the year 4; now they just do it for a term in year 4 and its only nine lessons. And it's a shame because it was really good, swimming and we're trying to negotiate with the University, I believe; I'm not sure how that's going at the moment. Trying to negotiate to get some more time, um, yeah ideally we would like to do it more.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay, interesting. Yeah, I'll just make of note of that to come back to that. Then about the staffing; you said that in the infants, the class teachers are responsible for the lessons…

Interviewee (SL): **Yes; no and the PPA but this year a PPA person has come and done a lesson for some of the classes…**

Interviewer (LJ): And sorry, who's the PPA person?

Interviewee (SL): **Somebody who covers the non-contact type of staff; that's the way we've done it.**

Interviewer (LJ): So is that like a…

Interviewee (SL): **In the last, it's quite a few years now, seven years we've done PE and [inaudible]…**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay so that's a PE specialist?

Interviewee (SL): **Sort of, because that's what they're doing so yes, you become specialised in it.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay.

Interviewee (SL): I used to do it and yes, I was a PE Specialist and in the last two years somebody has taken over from me.

Interviewer (LJ): Okay.

Interviewee (SL): But I kind of helped and supported and trained up and then she's done a very good job in the last couple of years but that's stopping because TA's are now going to be covering PPA.

Interviewer (LJ): Right.

Interviewee (SL): Although we are getting in for, I'm not quite sure of the final details but in the junior department we are going to get in somebody who is a sports coach to do some PPA so we are going to have some specialist teaching up in the juniors still, years 5 and 6.

Interviewer (LJ): So what, what do you make of that because if you compare to your position, because you've got that background in teaching and [inaudible], you're part of the school and you've got that specialism in PE but then you've got somebody external coming in as a sports coach; how, how do you…

Interviewee (SL): Well I feel okay about it because I recommended these people. There were going to be other people and I said, "Not happy," and actually I feel respected because they've not got them in and they've got these people that I have observed, they've been in, they've talked in my classes and I think that they know their stuff and they're good. However I'll be interested to see them teach dance [interviewer laughs] and possibly gymnastics actually [laughs], um I think games is their forte because obviously these are generally football coaches. They do have, depending on who you get in, they can have specialist dance teachers and so on but they are, the people I know, they're prepared to work from schemes I'm going to prepare to tell them exactly what I want them to do as well and I'm hoping that, as they are good with the children, they're good teachers, the same, I'm hoping that they will do a good job actually so…and possibly better than the teachers [whispers] to be fair [interviewer laughs] so…

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): And I know it's going to happen.

Interviewer (LJ): Yes, yeah.

Interviewee (SL): Because…so I actually am pleased about it and my daughters going to be in one of the classes where it's going to happen so I'm pleased.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, okay, but if you've got the generalist, do they bring certain strengths to it?

Interviewee (SL): Well they just do what they can [inaudible] I made this scheme and I gave it to her and she instantly said, "Well I'm not teaching football," and I felt like saying, "Well I don't turn around and say 'I'm not teaching poetry' just because I'm no good at it." I can't, you know I couldn't say that, could I? She said, "Well I had a really bad time when I was at school teaching football; I'm not teaching football." Well I was told I was rubbish at poetry at school, doesn't mean to say I'm not going to teach it; I'm sorry [laughs] but uh; I didn't say that…anyway [both laugh] I might take that opportunity for her class to do a little bit more dance because she seemed keen to be teaching the jive so you know, I think a bit of a compromise; if she really does have an aversion to teaching it, yeah just like as I said, if somebody said you had to lead singing and you'll have to do the solo at the front of the whole school and teach this song, I also would think 'Urgh, I don't want to that' so I also think you've got to go with what you've got…

Interviewer (LJ): Sure, sure.

Interviewee (SL): And hope that the balance is there across the school.

Interviewer (LJ): Okay and then just to look at your background, Vicky; how long did you say you have you been teaching for now?

Interviewee (SL): [Pause] [Interviewer laughs] 14 years?

Interviewer (LJ): 14 years? Okay.

Interviewee (SL): Oh no, hang on that's here, that's at this school.

Interviewer (LJ): Right.

Interviewee (SL): 17 years [laughs]; how old am I?

Interviewer (LJ): 17 years; okay, brilliant. And can you remember back to your training…

Interviewee (SL): Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer (LJ): Did you have much provision for PE within that?

Interviewee (SL): Well I was a PE Specialist…

Interviewer (LJ): So what was like, was that good?

Interviewee (SL): Fantastic.

Interviewer (LJ): Was it?

Interviewee (SL): Fantastic; Warwick University, brilliant. Loved it; excellent teaching, qualifications in, you know, teaching netball, hockey, swimming; just all the different sports and we used to do it ourselves, we used to do the theory behind it, we did all the sports science as well with it. I did it for the first two years because actually my main subject was geography but in the two years I felt that we covered loads. If you weren't a PE Specialist, however, um…you wouldn't get much, just like at art; I think I got five weeks, five lessons, five hour lessons; I probably think that's it's the same so it's quite poor.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm.

Interviewee (SL): But I personally, my training was excellent, really very good.

Interviewer (LJ): Good, good and then since you qualified, in that 17 years have any sort of opportunities for CPD or training or anything that you've had like that; has anything stood out as being particularly good for that time you've been involved?

Interviewee (SL): [Pause] Yes, we had a good PE advisor who did some good gymnastics inset where we would go and watch a lesson; that was really good, I think that was the best way to learn; go and watch a lesson. We've had specialists come in and to come and teach a lesson as well and that's worked in a school so I've done it where, you know lots of schools have gone and sat round the edge of the hall and watched the lesson or I've done it the other way where you've had somebody come in and teach your own class, that's worked well but it's always been in gym; gymnastics. They've had people, again through the Partnership they've had people come and do games, like multi-skills, things like that; that's been good. [Pause] And we've had other inset where we've gone and had a training where it's just been teachers and we've learnt like dodgeball or we've learnt…so they've had one or two but actually the inset at the moment is dire.

Interviewer (LJ): Is it?

Interviewee (SL): Yeah, it's dire; they, um, there's hardly any PE courses that I can send a teacher on. There was Twilight in tennis, run by the LTA but we went on that the previous year [laughs slightly] but this year there's been virtually nothing else. There's one that one of my teachers went on that was, I think it was good, um; primary but there's not a lot available now, not a lot.

Interviewer (LJ): So you, just to ask you specifically about TOPS; was that something that you got involved with?

Interviewee (SL): **TOPS gym, yes; um, got the TOPS games as well [inaudible] TOPS dance…**

Interviewer (LJ): Did you rate that approach, do you like that? Your sort of bag of goodies and resource cards and all that?

Interviewee (SL): **It's all, it's all, um, mixed; oh what are they called? Liquorice All--, oh no, like all the different schemes, I can't; we don't just stick to one so you couldn't just do TOPS gym or just TOPS anything. I think you just add it to your; [inaudible] lots, we use all sorts; Val Sabin and Dorem scheme and you know, I personally think using lots for myself but that's because I've had time to look at it whereas if you've got a teacher, to actually just pick up a card; you know a non-specialist, then yes it is, it is useful. And in fact this one teacher I was telling you about who is perhaps less confident and she was saying, "Oh there are TOPS games cards out there, can you get them?" so, and I haven't got them at the moment you know, TOPS basketball, you know, specialist ones; TOPS hockey, TOPS rugby and she's asking for them but I believe they don't make them anymore.**

Interviewer (LJ): Right.

Interviewee (SL): **I don't know if that's true.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, might be actually because that would have been through; actually it was subsumed into PESSCL so I think the funding for PESSCL's stopped so I would imagine that that's probably stopped as well.

Interviewee (SL): **So I might just see if I can get a copy of them somewhere.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **[Inaudible] meeting with Jean McCormack and she said; these are all these things to return to her. Well, this is all the TOPS; oh no, that's something different…oh no that's the PESSCL; these are all the core tasks. I've got to return these to her; is that TOPS? Or is that something different?**

Interviewer (LJ): No that's; well yeah that's the more recent incarnation of it I think.

Interviewee (SL): **Yeah; but to be honest with you the original ones were fine, the core tasks although that has core tasks for all of the other areas, the athletics and everything.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay, I was going to ask you…you know the role that you had as a PE Coordinator, here…?

Interviewee (SL): **I'm still doing it…**

Interviewer (LJ): How did you, how did you sort of get that sort of position…?

Interviewee (SL): **I've had it ever since I've been a teacher, to be honest with you.**

Interviewer (LJ): Have you? Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **Yeah.**

Interviewer (LJ): And so what; how did that happen? Did you put yourself forward for that, were you [inaudible]

Interviewee (SL): **Just look at your qualifications, don't they?**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **Just a PE Specialist, put her as PE Coordinator; nobody else happened to have that kind of experience so I've always had it; nobody else has got any PE background in this school, at all, um, unfortunately; I could do with it in this school but there's nobody that's a specialist in anything. Oh actually no that's not true, the [inaudible] the one who was, the junior one but she's backed off a bit but she has been [inaudible]; these are her files and I've been going through her things.**

Interviewer (LJ): So does that make a difference then because your, are you a bit of a lone ranger in this school in that regard for PE?.

Interviewee (SL): **Yeah, um [pause] yes and we have had whole school training and people have their set lessons I think that they do, uh; I have a lot, I think; I'm happy with the way the infants is taught because you know, I've had quite a long time to build it up so I'm very happy and I've just lately done an audit as to, you know, what do you, what do you teach, how do you teach it, when do you teach it and the infants, I was amazed it's still back to what I'd originally planned; I was amazed.**

Interviewer (LJ): [Inaudible]

Interviewee (SL): **So I was really pleased about that because of course I put a lot of the planning in place. The juniors, um, I'm not so sure about what's taught; they weren't, they don't have planning that were handed in at the moment; we used to. At the moment I haven't seen any planning.**

Interviewer (LJ): So you know the plan that you prepared, was that, was that a unit of work or a longer term or…

Interviewee (SL): **I just did a medium; I did a long term plan and as part of the scheme of work I did, for the infants I did per year group; gym, games and dance; what I wanted them to cover in the year and then underneath each section so say it was, say it was kicking; or you know a very simple skill, I would then put a list of resources where you can activities from for that.**

Interviewer (LJ): Oh, okay.

Interviewee (SL): **So I didn't say, here is a lesson plan on, um and then because I taught it I then developed medium term plans so for each half term and I'd write that out in more detail and then they've kind of taken those on board really and adapted them now other things have come in like playground games that they felt that they needed so that's probably overtaken some of the other things. They have been given planning over there, based on the QCA; I know Helen went, put a lot of effort into doing some plans, writing a lot of plans linked to the QCA, really detailed to try and support them [pause] and they might have used them originally but then I think you still then get your favourites and just stick to what you know.**

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm, okay. So what, what do you think a typical PE lesson would look like then?

Interviewee (SL): **Infants or juniors?**

Interviewer (LJ): Well maybe both if you know?

Interviewee (SL): **Well nursery they'll go in there and they'll turn a CD on and lets all move, you know, shake your hands; that kind of thing [laughs], you know, acting around, acting to music and to, following instructions and moving your body and things. Reception again, they might have games, they might have gym; they do have games, they do have gym, parachute, circle games; that kind of thing. But generally it would start with a warm up or a fun, you know warm up type game, learning skill and then applying the skill into either a game or you know, just practising it really. Normally with the infants it's quite difficult to get a big game going, certainly earlier on anyway but they might go in pairs or might go in a small group to practice something or make their own games up. And in gym, yes a warm up, maybe do some floor work, using the apparatus.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay, yes so…

Interviewee (SL): **So what was the question…?**

Interviewer (LJ): It was about the typical lesson, well yeah that's…

Interviewee (SL): **Yeah well really its, yeah you just do a warm up, do the skill and it would be same in; you'd do the same in juniors and they do do that.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay. And what about the assessment part; how do you do that?

Interviewee (SL): **Um, what we do is we have, we have a proforma which we use in the infants, key stage 1 actually; foundation stage is different, they have their own; they do the yellow observations and you know, assess that properly down there. And then in key stage 1 we have proforma where we do one for games, one for gym, one for dance and they have, we have tasks; I'm just wondering if I've got it…um, trying to think where it is. It's only the PE files at the moment [pause, looking through files], um so for each year group you'd have what they should be able to do on a, for example a games skill; sorry, what they must be able to do, what they should be able to do and what they could so we've got the extension activity and what we do is we put each name down and we would teach a; we would put like a target where we think that they're going to be based on your initial assessment at the beginning and this is where you think that they're going to be at the end.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay.

Interviewee (SL): **So you put a teacher assessment and then you actually assess it at the end and then; so you see if they've exceeded where you think that they're going to be, and so on.**

Interviewer (LJ): Okay; yeah, yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **And then we pass that on to the next, so the year 2 class so the year 2 would then follow that on and it's sort of developmental; and we do that for each of the ages. The key stage 2 haven't done any assessment so what I have done because I decided that they would find this more onerous; we're used to doing this and this is very much linked to my planning, which is what we do; what I've decided to do with the, for next year is to get them to level them which immediately they think, "No way, I'm not levelling each child in PE," but actually what I've given each, what I'm giving and have given some teachers already is, [rustling through papers] so that's for example just a long term plan of what I would expect them to teach in the autumn, spring or summer based on the different areas. So what I'm going to get them to do, again, each child and I want them to level them in games, gym, dance, swimming if its relevant, athletics and then an overall level and they said, "No way, I wouldn't know where to start." So, I've given them lots of progression then I've got this, the key skills so they could turn to the level that's roughly relevant to their class and then they could, I've got the I Can statements and so then they can use these to level the child and then actually once they've got**

this in front of them, they're, "Oh yeah, I can do that," and I said, "But that's actually; it's actually easier to do this than…" and then I've given them the core tasks because then they can base; so that they know that what they're teaching is around the right level and I, I'm going to recommend that they use the core tasks as well for assessment, you know, so if they set up one of these core tasks they can use that for an assessment piece of work.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm…

Interviewee (SL): And actually once they've got this in their hands they were like, "Oh yeah, yeah I can do that," and…because they, you know I've had lots of training and I'm aware of all of those but they haven't but once they'd got them they were alright.

Interviewer (LJ): Sure.

Interviewee (SL): I originally set up a video of all the core tasks but that's way gone now [both laugh]; they're not going to watch these videos are they? [Pause]

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, brilliant so last sort of bits and pieces…

Interviewee (SL): So basically not a lot of assessment at the moment in juniors but hopefully there will be.

Interviewer (LJ): Okay. Then I was going to ask you about, a bit around policy really; about particularly PESSCL and what your view of the Partnership and all that sort of thing was…because you were linked with Denis weren't you?

Interviewee (SL): Uh-hmm.

Interviewer (LJ): It was Denis…?

Interviewee (SL): Denis [Inaudible]

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah; so how did you find that whole relationship?

Interviewee (SL): It was great; Denis was particularly good. His role changed, didn't it as his hours got cut or as he was having to do more and I can't think what he was doing more of but we had less, he had less relationship with the schools but at the beginning and the way they developed it and trained it, I though was excellent. So that was a really good use of Government money at the beginning; in fact I think it was a really good use of Government money full stop and it's a shame it's being cut.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm. So what was so good about it? What did you value most about it?

Interviewee (SL): **The training, at the beginning; you know, just general real core sort of, what's high quality PE, you know? Just everything about it and the planning; it was really good training but also the way that they, we built up a support network of schools. I mean, no other subject has that, do they?**

Interviewer (LJ): No, no.

Interviewee (SL): **Now…they still have regular meetings now where all the schools go and it's really built up something and apparently there's more events going on this year, after it's been stopped than there were last year.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah right, okay.

Interviewee (SL): **I mean that's fantastic, isn't it? There are still Schools Sports Coordinators at the moment but that's going to stop, isn't it?**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah I think they're Competition Managers now, aren't they? That's the funding that's; I think that's going on till 2013.

Interviewee (SL): **And then is that stopping as well?**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah so that goes as well.

Interviewee (SL): **That's a shame because I think that is a mistake; I really think that's a mistake. If they want to develop sport in this country then I think you need to set up places where they can go and compete at a school level, you know just general class and I think if you don't have that in place there's no motivation; because that's what motivating me, now, to get these children to be taught it in lessons so that they can go and then compete whereas if that's not going to be provided…I mean I think that hopefully the idea is that schools will then take on a thing so for example I like tennis; if we've got a new school and we've got tennis courts I'd be very happy to organise a tennis tournament once a year and I think if one school who's interested in gym particularly or another school in netball and so on, football then each school could organise an event and I think that would work, in a cluster.**

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm.

Interviewee (SL): **So we set up clusters and then…**

Interviewer (LJ): So I mean the Governments claiming now…

Interviewee (SL): **[Inaudible] too much time on PE Coordinators and we don't get any recognition for it.**

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm.

Interviewee (SL): Nothing; maths and English, they get time off. "Oh, you've got to buy some maths resources; here let me give you an afternoon." PE, we don't get anything and I'm telling you there is more work in PE than there is maths and no recognition, and you get the people saying, "No, I'm not doing that," whereas in maths you can't turn round and say that so it's a horrible job [both laugh]; and then try it when you're in a school where there's no resources.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, yeah.

Interviewee (SL): Nowhere to do it.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): And then you very kindly have a university that's offering you some facilities and then you've got staff saying, "It's a little bit raining," or, "Oh, I need six adults to take my class of 30 over there; where am I going to get five more adults from; risk assessment, oh no, I haven't got a letter from each parent saying that I can take them off site," and etc., etc. so it's not that easy.

Interviewer (LJ): No it's not, not at all.

Interviewee (SL): Anyway, there's my whinge gone.

Interviewer (LJ): The Government's claiming now that the changes that have been made through PESSCL and the clusters and so on, that they're embedded and they'll continue; do you think that'll be the case?

Interviewee (SL): I do, I do think something will happen, I do; it's the same faces you see in the schools, I know all of the PE Coordinators pretty much, now and I think; I still think you need somebody to coordinate it, I really do. Who's going to coordinate it? I mean there used to be people that just sort of took it on to coordinate it, like say the football; Chris Timms at St Oswald's but he, he's now been promoted of course because he's an efficient sort of person which is why he took it on in the first place and now because he's been promoted he's had to drop it because he hasn't got the time to do it. But you do need those people so I am a bit concerned that you do need somebody to coordinate it.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm, interesting. And then the School Sports Survey that was part of PESSCL which evaluated the…

Interviewee (SL): Never heard of anything; such rubbish and a waste of time in my entire life! That was the waste of money, effort, time; ridiculous, rubbish! [Interviewer laughs]

Interviewer (LJ): Why do you say that? [Both laugh]

Interviewee (SL): Because it was all a load of rubbish; the children told us lies, they didn't know what sport they did after school and there was one that we had to do on the computer; oh, that was a nightmare and it was all wrong, anyway. Well the children had to do it, didn't they and they would say, "Oh yeah, yeah I do three hours of PE during the week," but just, sorry it was a waste of time.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah [laughs], okay; so that's clear then.

Interviewee (SL): It really is; I can't see how surveys like that can help you move forward in PE because I didn't think it gave you a true picture of what the children were actually doing and its maybe because I was working with children under seven, because they were telling me stuff that I didn't know was true or not and also the fact that these surveys had to be done, the last year on the computer, one at a time meant that I or somebody else had to sit with them because they couldn't have done it independently. Of course the teachers weren't going to do it so…

Interviewer (LJ): So, exaggerated, do you think those figures may be not quite accurate as they…

Interviewee (SL): All a pinch of salt…

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, claimed to be…okay.

Interviewee (SL): So no, I would completely disregard them, wouldn't; they were invalid for your Ph.D. research.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): You didn't want to hear that, did you? [Both laugh]

Interviewer (LJ): No I did. The impression I'm getting you see is that I think that PESSCL has had quite a dramatic impact in many ways but the figures were definitely inflated and the impression I'm getting as well is that there was pressure from SSCO's to inflate things and to, you know, to put a good spin on things as well and…

Interviewee (SL): And to get better results, each year in, year out and they changed the goal posts just as I'm sure the Government does and the bank does and everybody else does to get results, it's all…

Interviewer (LJ): I mean it's not to say, you know again it's not that it's not had a positive impact but…

Interviewee (SL): Well I've said it had a fantastic impact; I think it was brilliant, survey; waste of time.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm, okay. And just to go back, why do you think coaches are now being accepted within PE lessons?

Interviewee (SL): I'd rather be doing it myself.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah. Before PESSCL, was that the case that coaches were coming into schools in quite the same way? I suppose they were always coming in to extra-curricular…?

Interviewee (SL): No, the; they were in; there are disadvantages of having coaches and that is, during Christmas plays they can't get in the hall and it's raining outside; what are they going to do? So that's a disadvantage. Um, they aren't going to be able to do all areas and they're not necessarily qualified teachers so can they deal with the child that kicks off or the child with the special needs as well; not necessarily. Some of them are very good though [inaudible], I think you have to be picky as to who because there are some very good ones out there and they're specialists in sport so as I say, comparing them to some of the teachers who are not, actually outweighs it.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm, yeah no, I can see what you're saying.

Interviewee (SL): However, a qualified teacher who's interested in doing it I think would be even better.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, and then a few other things about PESSCL; you sort of alluded to it earlier; do you think that that competition structure is starting to or has dictated what happens within curriculum time so is the notion of having you know, we've got the basketball coming up…

Interviewee (SL): I think in some schools, yes.

Interviewer (LJ): In a few weeks so let's do basketball; is that happening?

Interviewee (SL): Well I certainly thought about it when planning my long term plan.

Interviewer (LJ): Do you think that's an issue at all? Is that, a good thing or is it a bad thing or…?

Interviewee (SL): Um, I think it's, um [pause], I think it's a good thing because then they get a broad spectrum of PE rather than you know, 'summer day, let's go outside and play rounder's' attitude. It's like oh no, the tennis is coming up, no the athletics is coming up; do something different. However, I've had people turn round to me saying, "If you think I'm doing athletics in my lesson, if you think we're practising for that you've got another thing coming."

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm.

Interviewee (SL): **"It's always the same children that are chosen, it's not fair," you know that kind of thing so actually what I'm going to do is, I'm going to start [inaudible] not put too much pressure; had a lot of negativity and just try and do intra-school competitions which is what they were suggesting so I've said that they have to do at least; oh I can't remember what I've said now, um, say one a term I think I said so that they have, developing from there and then doing. I don't know how many will do; two or three maybe, inter [intra]-school competitions as well as, yeah maybe four, football as well.**

Interviewer (LJ): Good oh, okay the last sort of few bits and pieces really, about the status and value of the subject. What do you think of the status of the subject within the school?

Interviewee (SL): **I think it's quite low down in our school and I don't think that's the case in all schools; um, as far as being valued; I think it is valued, I just don't think it has the priority because they don't have to have the targets for the Government, etc., you know and you're not assessed on it, you know, you're not given your level and you're not called a failing school if you're not doing high quality PE or two hours of PE; they might recommend you do more but you wouldn't be a failing school I don't think.**

Interviewer (LJ): So in reality when it comes down to it, when it comes to the crunch what you're suggesting is right, actually maths and English grades and you know, that's what we're assessed on...

Interviewee (SL): **Which is a shame because you're right, in their heart they know; you want fit children, they enjoy it, PE is great. Sometimes there's a bit of effort isn't it, involved; a bit of noise, a bit of getting resources together. Effort for them to have to get changed or whatever, um and its easier sometimes to stay in the classroom so it's sad to say that but from my experience, as a whole school it hasn't actually had, it's still been taught and it's been taught well in the infants and I haven't, because I have only just amalgamated I am not as familiar with the juniors but I know that other things have got in the way, unfortunately.**

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm and so, the last couple of questions that leads into nicely is, if you could make changes within PE within this school and maybe broader I suppose, what would you, what would instigate, what sort of things would you like to do, do you think?

Interviewee (SL): **Well I am starting to be more specific about what I want them to teach which we haven't done before; we might have just said games or invasion games in this six weeks whereas I am being more specific and saying which invasion games, trying to get progression through those so that they will have met netball whereas if every;**

they could get to high school having never played netball and I think that's shocking and I think that it needs to be…so that's one change. As I said before, would potentially be keen to organise an event at the school if we've got the facilities for it; would be prepared to do that. There needs to be more inset training; it is something that people shy away from and you do need training and I think funding should come from the Government to have people to coordinate it, to do inter-competitions; I don't think it can really be done without that and I think it should be a core subject; I think, it is going to be a core subject, isn't it?

Interviewer (LJ): Initially they've said that but they seemed to have backed away from it a little bit because initially with that, the new revision it was English, maths, science and PE were coming up first…

Interviewee (SL): Yeah, that's right.

Interviewer (LJ): But now actually they've dropped that so they're all coming up at the same time...

Interviewee (SL): Oh, have they? Shame…

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm.

Interviewee (SL): But I think fitness, fitness of children should be a priority, I really do.

Interviewer (LJ): Hmm.

Interviewee (SL): This business of wraparound care and trying to use schools more will support that though and will bring in more sports coaches and will, there will at least be more opportunities for some; they might have to pay for it so might be only those that can afford it. We've just had a survey that's gone out by Premier Sports Company that are going to do some before and after school and lunchtime clubs for us but you have to pay, £2 for a lunchtime one which will be 20 minutes, half an hour and £3.50 for an after school one for an hour and not everybody will want to pay that so, so I think that's it really.

Interviewer (LJ): Brilliant; I think that's it. Excellent, thanks so much, that's great. It's really good.

Interviewee (SL): Useful or not? Is it similar or different from what other people say? I'd be interested to know.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah its similar sorts of themes coming out, um, it is definitely. What I'm finding, it's quite dispiriting really is that I think a lot of, in terms of the quality, what happens within schools it's based on the people involved; if you've got somebody like yourself who's sort of strong in

it and pushes it then it starts to work and you've got it established here within the infants…

Interviewee (SL): **I have in the infants and I'm, yeah; working on the juniors [laughs], slowly, slowly.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, it's a bit like that and similarly, I mean you said about you're a little bit on your own here; when it seems to work well you've got somebody who's in charge of PE that's like, 'yeah I'm up for it' and then there's maybe other couple of people and staff who are…

Interviewee (SL): **That are keen…**

Interviewer (LJ): Just a bit sporty and into it as well and it gets the whole momentum going…

Interviewee (SL): **I'm missing that a little bit.**

Interviewer (LJ): You know so that seems to work but perversely the opposite of that is that some places I've come across PE Specialists who are a bit, not really bothered, you know and there's no real, no real sort of baseline of 'this is the standard we're working to', so there seems to be quite a lot of variety around it; some schools actually are really trying hard but other schools its dropping off the radar a bit and…

Interviewee (SL): **Oh right.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, sometimes I'm coming away, it's quite dispiriting sometimes, and you know it really is. It's given really quite low priority, but it's that, variability that is maybe the key thing to take out of it, maybe because it's not monitored in the same way…

Interviewee (SL): **Yeah but just because art's, art's not monitored either. It's tricky though because if you compare it to art, if it's supposed to have the same; is it supposed to the same weighting as something like art?**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah.

Interviewee (SL): **In which case it probably it is higher, you know; more PE is probably done than art so you know you have to, NDT or whatever, you have to put it into perspective; it isn't a core subject, it isn't so if you put it like that, its, it's not doing too badly.**

Interviewer (LJ): No. The other thing, I mean what you said about Partnership is, I think its bang on; it seems to be that way that you know the, a lot of the stats that are produced around it are inflated but nonetheless it's had this impact and now maybe that the funding's gone or going, I think without that somebody to, just to pull it together, I think initially goodwill will prevail but then one year you know, the tennis

tournament will be cancelled because of weather and then next year it'll be a bit busy and we didn't do it last year so it will sort of just…

Interviewee (SL): **Like our sports day didn't happen this year and I'm gutted.**

Interviewer (LJ): But do you know what I mean?

Interviewee (SL): **Oh yeah.**

Interviewer (LJ): I think it; I suspect it will just start to go back to what it was before, you know, that sort of status quo that we had.

Interviewee (SL): **Well to be fair, as I've not had so far the best experience of being coordinator of the whole school, I wouldn't put myself forward necessarily as a PE Coordinator in another school because of the negativity I've found.**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, you're battling against it

Interviewee (SL): **And it's not the most; and as I've said about the expectations of time, is that is taking to do all of the organisation of things; no recognition, no time…**

Interviewer (LJ): People don't understand that.

Interviewee (SL): **I don't want to do that.**

Interviewer (LJ): No, people don't understand it and again I'm getting that a lot and I know because I've been there myself [interviewee laughs], actually if you're putting on a tournament or a competition or you're taking kids out or whatever it is, the paperwork around that is huge.

Interviewee (SL): **Oh, well they've just organised a sports day, over at the University; all the risk assessments and method statements and the meetings and everything and then they just like…**

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, but people don't, people don't understand that, any parents or even staff, you know they sort of turn up and get their child [inaudible].

Interviewee (SL): **They said, "Oh, we just want one day; if its rained off we're not going to do it again because of all the effort," and I'm thinking no, because of all the effort we do need another day and then unfortunately that was rained off as well, I was like, "Oh no."**

Interviewer (LJ): [Inaudible] I don't, people just see the event happening, there's no; not that they're being nasty or anything but they just don't understand what's gone into it, they just don't see the hours that have gone into it.

Interviewee (SL): **No, no.**

Interviewer (LJ): And it is hours, isn't it; it really is.

Interviewee (SL): And going to all these events is hours actually and it's the same people, same person that goes so that's the problem, that is a definite problem so raising the, raising the awareness of it I think because people are keen but I think they want recognition for it, or money [laughs] which is recognition, isn't it, in a way?

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah, that's not, you know…

Interviewee (SL): It's going to be a priority.

Interviewer (LJ): Nothing wrong in anyway, that, is it; it's perfectly natural.

Interviewee (SL): Yeah.

Interviewer (LJ): Yeah. Right, brilliant; I won't take any more of your time.

Interviewee (SL): No, well thanks very much.

Interviewer (LJ): No that's fab, that's great.

Interviewee (SL): Yeah, no if there is anything that we can do as far as you know, helping with your students…

Interviewer (LJ): Oh yeah, that was one thing I was going to say….

End of transcription